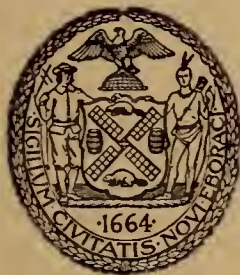




AR01551663

ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
and the  
DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
F. H. LaGUARDIA, Mayor

•  
1938



MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY

Price Fifty Cents

# Ex Libris

SEYMOUR DURST

*t' Fort nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans*



FORT NEW AMSTERDAM



(NEW YORK), 1651

*When you leave, please leave this book  
Because it has been said  
"Ever'thing comes t' him who waits  
Except a loaned book."*

OLD YORK LIBRARY — OLD YORK FOUNDATION

0427936 BOX 103

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY





# ANNUAL REPORT

of the

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

and the

DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

F. H. LaGUARDIA, Mayor

•

1938

MUNICIPAL BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY

Price Fifty Cents

Opposite

11A

9127

.115

A12

1938

JULIEN PRINTING CORP., NEW YORK



CITY OF NEW YORK  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
Municipal Building

December 31, 1938

HON. FIORELLO H. LAGUARDIA,  
Mayor and Chairman of the Board of Estimate,  
New York, N. Y.

Sir:

Herewith is respectfully submitted the ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING FOR 1938.

May I take this opportunity to express to you, and through you to the members of the Board of Estimate, the Council, and other departments and branches of the city government, the appreciation of the Commission and the Department for the many courtesies shown this new body during its formative months.

Respectfully,

R. G. TUGWELL,  
Chairman.

## CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

R. G. TUGWELL

Chairman

VERNON S. MOON, Chief Engineer, Board of Estimate, *ex officio*

LAWRENCE M. ORTON

EDWIN A. SALMON

CLEVELAND RODGERS

ARTHUR V. SHERIDAN

PHILLIP B. THURSTON, Secretary

## DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

R. G. TUGWELL

Commissioner

FREDERIC P. BARTLETT

Administrator

WILLIAM J. SHEA

Division of Mapping and  
Zoning

THEODORE T. McCROSKY

Division of Master Plan

LOUIS STURCKE

Division of Capital and  
Assessable Improvements

F. D. McHUGH

Division of Research  
and Reference



ANNUAL REPORT  
of the  
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
and the  
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING  
for 1938

This first Annual Report of the City Planning Commission and the Department of City Planning is more an outline of New York's major problems than a record of progress in solving them. As a new agency of the municipal government the Commission's first tasks were to reach a clear understanding of its functions and responsibilities and to set up an organization to carry out the purposes of the Charter.

The commission took office on January 1, 1938, with Mr. A. A. Berle, Jr. as Acting Chairman. Following Mr. Berle's resignation, on March 5, Mr. Vernon S. Moon served as Acting Chairman until the appointment, on April 13, of Mr. R. G. Tugwell as permanent Chairman. A small staff was provided and temporary quarters established on the 27th floor of the Municipal Building.

At its first meeting, on January 3, the Commission created the office of Secretary and named Mr. P. B. Thurston to fill it. As a new body with large enumerated powers but without particular precedent here or elsewhere, numerous legal forms for its calendars, reports, resolutions, minutes and other public procedures had to be formulated. It has been the duty of the office of the Secretary to prepare these. It was necessary to draw analogies from other agencies, especially those which performed such of the present technical business of the Commission as was carried on previously. General planning had been carried on by such temporary official agencies as the Mayor's Committee on City Planning, by some city department heads, notably the Park Commissioner, or by private planning agencies such as the Regional Plan Association. These

predecessors left a legacy of information but no governmental precedents.

Changes in the wording of the Building Zone Resolution, the zoning maps and the city map were transferred from the old Board of Estimate and Apportionment to the Commission for hearing and determination. Hence a large body of precedent for the calendars, hearings, reports and resolutions of the Commission was found in the minutes and records of that Board. This was true also of the Bureau of Engineering, which furnished the old Board with its more detailed reports.

Problems relating to the use of city property, especially waterfront land, were formerly handled by the Sinking Fund Commission which disappeared with the old Charter, and the minutes of this Commission were helpful. For the few years during which there had been a Capital Outlay Budget, this was handled by the Bureau of the Budget and the greatly enlarged provisions for the Capital Budget and Five Year Program in the new Charter in reality meant the development of new instruments of procedure.

At present the last of these tasks is in sight, that of the procedure regarding the adoption and modification of the master plan, something which New York City has never known and for which the new Charter embodies broad, new sections. The nearest analogy is the history-making task a quarter of a century ago of preparing and adopting the Building Zone Resolution under the direction of the Committee on the Height of Buildings.

By the time the Commission has begun to function fully under all the provisions of the new Charter, another formidable task will need to be undertaken, that of drafting, obtaining public comment upon, and adopting, an entirely new zoning technique adequate to the city's needs. New York's Zoning Resolution was a pioneering work. But it was a cautious and conservative one. This may have been justified once; indeed it is often pointed out that the New York zoning never suffered a major set-back in the courts. But the caution which was once possibly justified by the need to conciliate the courts has long since become a handicap. Other communities

have gone far ahead. This experience, together with thousands of legal decisions, over five hundred in New York State alone, furnishes a rich background upon which to build anew. This work must be undertaken at once.

During the Commission's early months the Secretary performed many functions which have since been distributed throughout the organization. It is hoped in future that, aside from preparing calendars, editing reports and maintaining relations with other official bodies, the Secretary's efforts can more largely be devoted to the work of revising the zoning resolution and carrying out other legal researches so essential to a new governmental function.

The Charter provides for Borough Advisory Planning Boards of three members each appointed by the Borough Presidents. The following persons were appointed to the Advisory Boards in the several boroughs: Manhattan, Albert Mayer, John H. Johnson, and Henry Bruere; Bronx, Jeremiah F. Cross, Rev. Bro. Amandus Leo, and Cleveland E. Dodge; Brooklyn, Edwin H. Thatcher, Mary E. Dillon, and Frank J. Taylor (later succeeded by Louis C. Wills); Queens, Edward A. McDougall, Charles G. Meyer, and Herman Ringe (succeeding G. William Magly, deceased); Richmond, Matthew W. Slaven, Mrs. William Mason Smith, and James Whitford.

The relations expected to be maintained between these Boards and the Commission are not made clear in the charter; and in the press of organization work it has not been possible to develop from this source all the assistance the Commission would like. It is hoped in the future to work out a procedure of referral and recommendation which may be helpful. Often the Advisory Boards, with their closer contacts in the localities, can bring to the solution of knotty problems an indispensable neighborhood view. There are certain matters which, in the development stage, the Commission will need to protect from public knowledge, but these are relatively few. Usually much is to be gained from the local advice represented by the Boards.

Until November, the Commission met regularly every other

Wednesday at 10:30 A.M. in the Board of Estimate Room, City Hall, Manhattan, except during a part of the summer. Additional recessed and special meetings were occasionally held. Beginning in November the Commission held weekly meetings and the time was changed to 2:30 P.M. on Wednesdays. All hearings were fixed three weeks in advance and when hearings were held and closed, the disposition of items was in general laid over one week for further study before final action. Rules governing the conduct of Commission business will be found in an appendix.

## The Department of City Planning

On January 1, 1938 the Department of City Planning had transferred to it nineteen persons from the office of the Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate. Since that time 47 permanent positions have been added. Of these forty-seven positions:

### Number filled:

By Commissioners . . . . .	5
By the Secretary and the Secretary to the Chairman . . .	2
By Transfer from:	
President's Office, Queens . . . . .	7
Secretary's Office, B. of E. . . . .	2
Law Department . . . . .	2
N. Y. C. Tunnel Authority . . . . .	2
Police Department . . . . .	2
Board of Transportation . . . . .	2
President's Office, Richmond . . . . .	1
Civil Service Commission . . . . .	1
Department of Health . . . . .	1
By appointment from Civil Service Lists . . . . .	3
By temporary appointees . . . . .	2
By provisional appointments pending the holding of examinations . . . . .	5

---

37

Number vacant . . . . . 10

The Department's personnel has, therefore, been recruited from many sources. Except for the Commissioners and the two exempt positions, all of its positions are in the classified, competitive service. City planning is a new function, however, and it cannot be expected that any staff so assembled can operate effectively without additional training and experience. The Department has cooperated with the New York State Department of Education and the Municipal Training Institute of New York State in the development of a New York City Regional Training School to be held in February. Further opportunities for in-service training are being planned. In its effort to create a suitable staff, the Commission fortunately had the cooperation of the Municipal Civil Service Commission, which has now approved the establishment of an "Economist" classification and a "City Planner" classification. The former is one of the few such classifications existing in any city government and should prove useful to other city agencies. The latter classification will, it is believed, permit the Division of Master Plan to be developed as it should. There are no results as yet from these approvals but they are reasonably to be hoped for in the future.

During the first half of the year, the entire Department comprised only one Division, that of Zoning and Mapping. This Division, manned by transferred employees of the Chief Engineer's Office, Board of Estimate, was responsible for the technical study of zoning and mapping changes which had previously been the responsibility of the Engineer's office. The number of items investigated was greatly in excess of the number reported on under the old Charter. This Division was also responsible for preparing the dockets required for hearings held under Section 201 of the new Charter. This section allowed applications for changes in the zoning resolutions or regulations to be filed by any taxpayer during the month of April. Soon after the middle of the year, a number of additional positions were approved by the Board of Estimate; so that during August and September a small group was able to initiate the new procedure required in the development of the



Capital Budget. The Division of Capital and Assessable Improvements was formally established. The staff assigned to this problem worked during a two-months' period almost as much time after office hours as during them. On October 13 the Board of Estimate amended the budget for the Department to a total of approximately \$180,000; part of this amendment involved transfers of employees as well as of funds. Most of this was transfer from the old Borough President's offices made necessary by corresponding changes of function and the new Charter. But final arrangements were not able to be made for this personnel until nearly November; so that only for two months, actually, were any employees available for work on the Master Plan. The Master Plan Division can therefore be said to have been established in November. Toward the end of the year a fourth Division, of Research and Reference, was created. It had become very clear that physical planning had to be based upon continuing economic and social research. It had also become evident that some one had to be responsible for the preparation of special reports and the development of general reference material. In July, a small administrative office responsible for the operations of the Department was developed. Most of these divisions were skeletal because of lack of funds.

Thus, over the period of a year, the Department of City Planning gradually divided its staff into four divisions and an operating office. Each division represented one of the four major activities of the City Planning Commission:

Mapping and Zoning

Capital and Assessable Improvements

Master Plan (Physical design of the Master Plan)

Research and Reference (Economic and social basis for the Master Plan)

During this first year the Department was in constant communication with the Bureau of the Budget as well as the Municipal Civil Service Commission; for planning is essentially new in government, and calls for special skills and training as well as budgetary support. The mere transfer, in other words, of either

money or men formerly engaged in work related to city planning in other agencies, is not sufficient for a new task unless old duties are to be correspondingly reduced. The City Planning Commission presented to the Bureau of the Budget requests for the provision of an adequate staff, but the general fiscal situation of the city has rendered this difficult for the Bureau to grant. A request for \$346,000 framed during Mr. Berle's chairmanship was reduced to \$123,480 by the present chairman. Only \$62,520, about fifty-per cent of an amount which was believed to be an immediate minimum, has been able to be provided. It is an understatement to say that lack of staff has so far been a handicap; it has very nearly been fatal. Meanwhile the Commission has relied upon a rather large WPA project to gather the basic data on present land uses and present zoning districts. This data can be gathered by the project but can only be analysed by the permanent staff.

The first year has been one of great activity in public improvement. During 1938 matters referred to the Commission by the Board of Estimate, received from other agencies or initiated by the Commission, numbered 738. A summary of such matters and the action taken on them is given on the following page.

Plans for various projects were submitted by the Borough Presidents' offices, the Park Department and other agencies, but maps for advertising hearings and reports, based on inspections and studies of the Commission, were prepared by the Department. Much of this work was done under adverse conditions by a small engineering staff, subject to continual pressure to conform to legal requirements as to time and procedure and in response to urgent demands of other branches of the city government. Many physical changes, including new thoroughfares, sewers, and street widenings were expedited in preparation for the World's Fair of 1939.

## Planning Procedure Under the Charter

Projects of great magnitude, costing large sums and bound to influence the development of the metropolis for decades, were referred to the Commission in quick succession. Many of these improvements had long been planned; others were entirely new,

# MATTERS HANDLED BY CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

January 1, 1938 to December 31, 1938

Cases	Referred by Board of Estimate	Received from Borough President etc.	Petitions	Initiated by C. P. C.	Total Projects	Withdrawn or filed	Hearings Held	Reports to Board of Estimate
Zoning .....	30	9	32	22	93	12	93	66
Map Changes .....	273				273	12	133	128
Drainage Plans .....	43				43		30	30
Assessable	193				193	2		162
Improvements .....								
Sites .....	28				28		1	20
Acquisition of Streets...	42				42			39
Parks and Playgrounds .....	24				24		17	17
Subdivision Maps .....		22			22			18
Parkways .....	10				10		10	10
Waterfront Plans .....	3				3		2	2
Grade Crossing Elimina- tions .....	1				1		1	1
Miscellaneous .....	6				6			2
	<u>653</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>738</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>287</u>	<u>495</u>



yet few of the projects submitted were conceived as part of a comprehensive city plan. Many of them bore no relation to budgetary or taxation realities and were submitted without due regard to relative urgency or importance. In passing on these numerous and varied proposals the Commission has been mindful of the need to expedite public work. Obviously, however, the procedure followed was not in keeping with the purposes of the Charter, which contemplates an entirely different method of providing public improvements. It calls, in fact, for the creation of a Master Plan as a guide in all such matters; but it also imposes on the Commission the duty of reporting promptly to the Board of Estimate on all references to it from that body.

Pending the adoption of a Master Plan the Commission has considered all proposed projects in relation to the existing City Map. Minor changes in the drainage and street systems—even important additions to highways which are already parts of the city's system—present few complexities; but many other proposals have involved much broader considerations. The Commission has endeavored to keep abreast of its routine work; but also it has taken cognizance of the larger implications of many projects before it and has presented its views as to the long-range aspects of certain specific improvements.

It is apparent from the first year's experience that the work of the Commission will follow a cycle. Plans for improvements which may best be undertaken during the spring, summer and fall, are generally submitted early in the year. Petitions for zoning changes are filed in April and require hearings during May and June. Preparation of the annual Capital Budget and Five-Year Capital Program starts in mid-summer and continues until November 1. Other activities of the Commission are continuous, but it will be necessary for the Commission and the Department of City Planning to follow this general order if it is to conform to the Charter requirements.

During the year members of the Commission have participated in many activities and conferences relating to city planning. With

Commissioner Orton, the Chairman attended the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Planning Officials, held at Minneapolis, Minn., on June 21-25, 1938, where he was elected a director of the Society. He presided at one of the meetings of the Planning Technicians' Conference, held in Washington from September 19 to October 1, under the auspices of the National Resources Committee; Commissioners Orton and Rodgers attended some of these meetings. Commissioner Sheridan represented the Commission at the Sixteenth Annual International Housing and Town Planning Congress held in Mexico City on August 13-21. He also represented the Commission at the Conference of New York State Mayors and Planning Officials held in Binghamton, N. Y., in June. Members of the Commission and representatives of the Department of City Planning participated in many conferences with various city departments and other agencies on matters relating to the solution of the city's problems.

These initial contacts with the professional and official organizations in the field of city planning should develop into continuing relationships of mutual advantage to all concerned. As one of the laboratories in which city planning is being currently developed and tested, the City of New York should make a valuable contribution to the development of city planning on the local level of government. New York happens to be equipped with devices which are the result of effectual efforts at modernization. It is at the moment in the lead. Similarly, this city and its planning department should derive practical assistance from organizations which are in touch with the theory and practice of city planning elsewhere.

As a current instance of such mutually helpful relationships, the National Resources Committee last October invited Commissioner Orton to serve as Chairman of its newly appointed Local Planning Committee. Until that time the Resources Committee had confined its efforts, with but minor exceptions, to planning on the national, regional and state levels. Before the end of the year, the Local Planning Committee had held two meetings, and laid

the foundation for staff and research work essential to the making of constructive recommendations for federal aid in the field of local planning.

With the appointment of the new Committee to advise it in the local field, there is every reason to expect new vitality, growing out of federal advice and assistance, in the planning of counties, cities and other units of local government. The Planning Department in New York City should be in a position to take full advantage of whatever aids and resources are made available by the federal agency.

### New York's Dilemma

It is the duty of the City Planning Commission, as indicated in Section 197, Chapter 2, of the Charter, to prepare and from time to time modify a Master Plan of the city

which shall show desirable streets, roads, highways and the grades thereof, public places, bridges and tunnels and the approaches thereto, viaducts, parks, public reservations, parkways, squares, playgrounds, roadways in parks, sites for public buildings and structures, building zone districts, pierhead and bulkhead lines, docks and wharves, waterways, routes of railroads, omnibuses and ferries, locations of drainage systems, sewers, sewage treatment plants, incinerators, water conduits and other public utilities, privately or publicly owned, and such other features, changes and additions as will provide for the improvement of the city and its future growth and development and afford adequate facilities for the housing, transportation, distribution, comfort, convenience, health and welfare of its population.

Preparation of a Master Plan of such comprehensiveness for New York City is perhaps the most formidable task of its kind ever seriously proposed. It will take time, much expert study, numerous public hearings and wide discussion before any considerable part of it can be developed and adopted. Meantime, entirely new neighborhoods are coming into being and other sections are deteriorating. The social and economic organism known as New York City is constantly being transformed under the pressure of economic and social forces.

In remarkable degree this has been the experience since New York's earliest settlement. The city's phenomenal growth has been continuous, although not regular, and all efforts to anticipate the needs of the expanding community have failed to meet the ever-increasing demands. Some of these efforts have created new problems which could not be foreseen when they were conceived. New York is one of the few vast metropolitan centers of the world which is not also the seat of a national government. It is, in fact, the creature of a State, without political power commensurate with its population, to say nothing of its wealth or its responsibilities. Policies affecting its welfare are determined in Albany and in Washington; but worse than that, its people are often affected by international forces which are unpredictable and beyond the control of any single government. This is the fate of any city situated as New York is, but in these years of uncertainty it is a circumstance especially hard to overcome.

New York's growth from one of several colonial seaports, a tiny settlement on Manhattan Island, into the leading American port and the greatest metropolis in the world has compelled much planning and replanning. Forty years ago the planners of that day, by taking in all of Kings County, within which was the city of Brooklyn and the vast areas which are now the Boroughs of Queens and Richmond, thought they had provided all the land necessary to take care of the population, the commerce, trade and other activities of any possible future Greater City; but outward thrusts of population continued until northern New Jersey, Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk, as well as parts of Connecticut, became integral parts of the metropolitan area, contributing to the city's problems as well as to its resources.

There is room within the city's boundaries for all the people and all the industries which are parts of the metropolis; but it is neither feasible nor desirable to bring about such concentration. New York and the metropolitan area are better places in which to live and work because of the spread of population. Yet the way in which this decentralization has been brought about and present

methods of distribution add to the difficulties of the immense community. Manhattan, where an actual decline in population has taken place, and older sections of the city generally, must shoulder burdens created by the spread of peoples and business into the outlying areas and beyond city and state borders.

## The Effect of Outside Forces and Policies

If the metropolitan area were a separate state or a single geographical and political unit, as closely integrated otherwise as it is economically, it could deal more effectively with many pressing difficulties. Certainly its resources would enable it to provide adequate services without greater levies on taxpayers than are now imposed; and probably with much smaller ones. The city's lack of proportionate political power is reflected in its capital and expense budgets, which annually carry vast sums for education, transit, the courts, and other services which are largely determined by the State. Most of the funds contributed by the city in the form of gasoline taxes are spent elsewhere although the city pays for highways, bridges and other facilities which are more widely used by non-residents than any in the State. Similarly the expense budget is burdened with mandatory expenditures imposed from Albany, where the city remains under-represented in the Legislature.

The effect upon New York City of policies and forces originating outside her borders is to be realized even more by considering the basic activities which make New York the leading center of the United States and one of the greatest of modern cities. New York's origin and its growth to the present size were due, first of all, to a magnificent harbor. The development of trade and commerce, resulting primarily from shipping, led to the expansion of banking, which made New York the financial center of the United States, if not of the world. This in turn brought about the concentration of other businesses here. Manufacturing, also to a large extent based upon shipping—coupled with the fact that New York and the metropolitan district have the largest supply of labor



and provide the greatest single market for all kinds of goods—contributed to make of the city a complex economic structure. Numerous cultural institutions and entertainment enterprises have given the city educational and dramatic leadership. The presence here of a wealthy market furnished the nucleus of a style center for the whole country.

In the past much of the planning undertaken by New York City was to care for an ever-increasing population and to provide space for multiplying activities of all kinds. Most of this planning represented belated efforts to meet manifest needs. Until a few years ago faith in New York City's continuing growth and almost limitless increase in business and industry appeared justified. The metropolis had attained such pre-eminence among world-cities that its position seemed impregnable. The pace of this growth was accelerated during the war and after; indeed it was at this time that the greatest expansion took place.

Depression is merely the absence of profitable economic activity; and it is perhaps more worth while to try to understand the reasons for New York's progress in the past than it is to search for the causes of the depression which changed the situation some ten years ago. Certainly the current troubles are largely of outside origin. The shifting of the United States from a debtor to a creditor nation, which took place early in the World War, did not affect New York adversely for some years. Later, the decline in foreign trade seriously undermined the business of the port. How important this fact was, can be understood by remembering that New York's rate of growth for over a century and a half was measured by the volume of business of the port. The correlation here was too exact to be accidental. The country as a whole had experienced many depressions; but the City of New York has never experienced a really serious setback; so long as the country remained a debtor nation exports continued to flow through the port and the volume of imports of raw materials remained substantial. New York had business to do and profited from it.

## Causes of New York's Prosperity in the Past

General construction slowed up in 1914 and many kinds of building stopped altogether after we entered the war, creating an accumulated shortage of buildings. By 1922 prosperity seemed to have returned and construction was resumed on a vast scale. In the following eight years a new city was built around the older community. This, with the extension of rapid transit, caused a distribution of population over outlying areas and a consequent deterioration of older areas which is one of today's most serious problems. Resumption of foreign lending after the war and shortages of goods brought about by the European conflict kept the boom going until the financial collapse in 1929. The world-wide depression hit shipping first. Both exports and imports dropped. Locally, construction was checked before the financial crisis developed.

It is important to emphasize the value to New York City of imports as well as exports. This is not the place to discuss misconceptions regarding the phrase "favorable balances", in relation to foreign trade, but the idea that New York City's prosperity is in some way dependent upon exporting more than we import is quickly dispelled by the record. New York has always handled more imports than exports. Bulky goods, such as cotton, wheat, corn, etc., and our principal manufactured exports, go out through ports scattered around the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Gulf of Mexico. Imported goods, which pay for exports, have always been handled in greater volume than exports in New York Harbor, and quite naturally, imports are the basis of many of New York City's leading industries and business activities.

During and after the war, when the world at large was clamoring for American goods, our own prosperity led to the buying of large amounts of foreign goods, especially of raw materials. Following the crash in 1929, this foreign trade diminished. The international economic warfare which has since prevailed has seriously affected New York's chief activities—shipping and its

related industries. The city was built on world peace. It has suffered more than the rest of the country from endemic war.

## The Decline of New York's Financial Power

The panic of 1929 and subsequent events also seriously weakened New York as a financial center. State and Federal governments have adopted laws and policies which have restricted operations in the financial field. From the viewpoint of national welfare these policies were entirely justified, but the fact remains that one of the city's most important functions has been greatly lessened. New York's financial power was once an effective offset to the lack of political power in formulating state and national policies. This is no longer true. It may never be true again.

The Stock Exchange and the other exchanges, the great commercial banks, trust companies, brokerage houses, insurance firms and other institutions having to do with finance, trade and corporate business not only represent the most powerful private money interests in the world; they provide a means of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. These institutions operate under Federal and State laws and the city has no authority to regulate them; it would, however, be altogether fitting to make a study of what may be done to prevent the loss of these critical assets. Reforms have changed the whole picture by now; but there is much work to be done if the rest of the world is to be given confidence again that New York is a desirable center for these activities. If something of the sort is not done the decay already visible will become disastrous.

## The Decline of Trade, Commerce and Finance

Continuance of unemployment and far-reaching changes in national and world conditions compel a complete reconsideration of the fundamental nature of the city's economic life. It is necessary to approach the community's problems without the old preconceptions. Metropolitan attitudes toward the rest of the country could be changed with benefit. Special advantages hereto-



fore enjoyed by New York have created jealousies and rivalries in other cities and sections. These could be ignored with impunity in the past; in the future they must be taken into account. Hereafter New York will have to compete with other communities and sections. This competition will not come from merely a few rivals but from many. The holding of advantages and the overcoming of handicaps will require energetic action. It is becoming increasingly necessary to consider the situation created by what seems to be a permanent diminution of commercial activity and of movement of commerce—in short, to study and plan for more than the “public improvements” and ordinary governmental administration. These other considerations will determine the kind of city for which any planning can be done. And so far New Yorkers have been singularly blind to the serious situation which has been precipitated.

It is not enough to provide New York with good government. That has already been achieved; the administration of the ordinary services of government is steadily improving; we live in comparative peace and security, guarded by honest police and assured of able and efficient administration of the city's routine affairs. But what is to be done with 200,000 families who are without private income? For years now, 15 or 16 per cent of the city's people have been on relief. Something must be thought of for a permanent program. We need to remove, so far as is possible, obstacles which retard our enterprises; to devise methods which will lessen the costs of living and of doing business in the city; to emphasize and make the most of the opportunities the city affords. Government has recently taken over many functions of private enterprise and has been compelled to provide huge funds for home relief and work relief. It must also help supply the leadership, ideas and direction essential in promoting enterprise, as well as to create environments and conditions which will encourage such undertakings. Failing this, the decline of recent years threatens to become permanent.

New York's functions as a primary market for goods, capital

and services are so well established that they are taken for granted and little has been done to foster them. We need to develop and dramatize all these functions. This dramatizing will not be enough, either, if it does not proceed from genuine earnestness in serving and unless it is infused with more humility than New York has been noted for in the past. The rest of the country is more demanding now of its Metropolis; it will still respond, however, to leadership and service when they are genuinely meant.

New York is not inhabited by a superior class of individuals who surpass the rest of the country in ideas or in other ways. The metropolis is merely the place where Idea Exchanges are operated, much as the Stock Exchange provides a market for securities. The ideas come from everywhere and are brought to New York because this is the place where ideas are evaluated, exploited and exchanged. It is headquarters for a large percentage of the enterprises which do a nationwide and worldwide business. All this is obvious enough to the reflective, but it is worth emphasizing and reiterating. New York is an important city because it is the chief port, mart and financial center of a great country. If New York is to remain great, the country must prosper, and New York must remain its center. It is now in danger of exchanging its place as a world center for one on the periphery of a continent.

## New York's Opportunity at the Fair

The World's Fair of 1939 will offer the greatest opportunity in our time to advance the interests of the city. The Fair was conceived as a device for attracting large numbers of visitors who would spend huge sums in the city, stimulating trade and helping numerous interests. But merely to stage a successful exposition which draws millions of visitors for one or two summers will be to miss the greatest chance in a generation. New York is still suffering from certain phases of over-expansion which took place during the war and boom days in the twenties. A two year boom based on the Fair might leave the city facing a serious local depression when the exposition closes. This could be avoided by using

the Fair to the utmost to revive and promote the city's basic activities, starting with the port.

From their inception "World's Fairs" have had as their objective the promotion of international trade. New York is one of the few cities in the world where a real world's fair could be held at the present time. It is possible, also, to perpetuate certain features of the Fair. The city might provide buildings to house permanent exhibits of foreign and domestic goods; to stage international art exhibits and similar shows which would carry forward the basic purpose of spreading good will and emphasizing the importance of exchanges of goods, ideas and cultural interests. A further extension of this idea to the dramatic and music fields is possible. New York is the recognized center of American drama and music. Mayor La Guardia's administration has done more than any other in the history of New York to promote its cultural institutions. This can be extended indefinitely. The Fair offers an opportunity for an effort to emphasize the value of foreign cultures to the metropolis and to America. And these dramatizations should not end with the Fair; they should be organized on a permanent basis. With the Federal Theater projects now well established it should be a practical matter to promote such a movement in connection with the Fair and to keep it going afterward.

New York can do much to help the theater, which is one of its most noted features. A revival of all the theatre arts is needed and there are many ways in which the city might help. It is true that the legitimate theater, so called, is handicapped in New York by being staged in relatively obsolete, uncomfortable and expensive quarters, a situation which can only be remedied by fairly complete rebuilding. The comparative comfort of going to the "movies" attracts many a customer who might rather go to the theater. But government aid of some kind can help, and is doing much to maintain and elevate the standards of the stage and of operatic and musical performances. The process of democratizing music is still in the experimental stage. The opera stands at the apex of

our cultural effort but it has been an enterprise patronized largely by and for the more opulent. The present administration has plans to promote opera in a more democratic manner. This, too, might be done in connection with the Fair, with the purpose of making certain that New York will continue to be the greatest opera and music center in the United States, if not in the world.

The Fair ought to be used to tell the plain truth regarding New York City's role in the scheme of things; what other communities mean to New York; the close relationship between the metropolis and the rest of the country and the world—in brief, to show the complete interdependence of New York—as self-evidently the greatest of American cities—and the smallest of villages, the farms, the big and little ship companies, and the humblest workers here or abroad, whose lives and work enter into New York's story. If the millions of persons who will visit the Fair could be given a real insight into the human side of the city and could be shown what New York does for the country and civilization it might help in dissipating misunderstanding and prejudice.

## The Primary Needs of the Port

The natural advantages enjoyed by reason of the port have been improved upon in many ways; yet the harbor is still a source of problems. This is because its railway feeders have been neglected. This was the conclusion of the New York-New Jersey Port and Harbor Development Commission, whose report and recommendations, made in 1920, led to the creation of the Port of New York Authority. The purpose in setting up the Authority was to bring about unification of the railroads serving the port and to end the wasteful duplication of effort and investments which add to the costs of handling goods in the harbor and in the metropolitan area.

The Authority developed a *Comprehensive Plan* to bring about these improvements; it was based upon the unification of railroad facilities, the construction of a tunnel under the harbor, belt lines to serve all sides of the port and eliminate unnecessary equipment and the unnecessary movement of goods. This plan has never

been carried out. Failing to secure an agreement with competing railroads for the joint use of terminal facilities, the Port Authority has devoted most of its efforts to the development of vehicular tunnels and bridges and an inland freight terminal in Manhattan.

Whatever the causes—and they seem at this distance to have been selfish and short-sighted ones—the failure to develop a comprehensive plan for rail facilities, including a freight tunnel under the harbor, was disastrous. Some of the anomalies in the present methods of handling goods are readily apparent, but the effects are not generally realized. The franchise under which the Pennsylvania Railroad brings passenger trains into Manhattan does not permit the use of the tunnel for freight. Privilege based on a franchise is of course not immutable. It is a present fact, however, that the New York Central Railroad enjoys monopolistic advantages in Manhattan; and that through its control of the Long Island and the New York Connecting Railroad, the Pennsylvania Railroad has similar advantages in Brooklyn and Queens; yet neither Manhattan nor Long Island has direct railroad connections with New Jersey for handling freight. This means that a large and valuable part of the waterfront on both sides of the harbor is used for railroad car-float and lighter terminals and that all goods from New Jersey must be ferried across the bay and the North River. To the extent to which this may involve delays and excessive costs in the handling of goods from railroads to ships and markets, it is, of course, responsible for the diversion of shipping to other ports. It may affect the city in other ways: in the costly methods of distributing food and consumable goods of all kinds and in needless trucking, which adds to traffic congestion and to the cost of upkeep of streets and bridges. Closely related to this problem is that of city markets. Planning for future primary and secondary markets waits on determination of the basic problem of transport among the boroughs as well as with New Jersey.

In addition to direct railroad connections, there is pressing need for the proposed Brooklyn-Battery vehicular crossing to serve the industries along the South Brooklyn waterfront. The



importance of this connection in the general scheme of city highways is stressed elsewhere in this report; what is emphasized here is special need for facilities to accommodate the immense amount of trucking between Brooklyn, Manhattan and other sections of the metropolitan area.

Certain requirements of the city in the matter of docks and wharves were presented at the capital budget hearings by the Dock Department but no clear picture of the city's future needs was given. This is true, also, regarding channels, marginal ways, marginal railroads, and bulkheading—all subjects requiring special and detailed study as the Master Plan is developed.

One of the remarkable achievements of the city in the past few years has been the recovery for recreation and other purposes of large parts of the waterfront. In Manhattan the improvements along the Hudson and the East rivers are notable; the proposed Harlem River Drive, the Brooklyn-Queens Parkway and other projects will create new waterfront recreational areas as well as provide express highways. It is important, however, to make certain that while waterfront areas are being reclaimed and improved there is no curtailment of the frontage necessary to serve shipping in the future. The Commission will need to be mindful of this as plans unfold.

## The Spread of Population Along Radial Lines

The city at large is suffering at present from intense competition among sections within its own borders, as well as from other parts of the metropolitan area, to secure residents, retail trade and manufacturing enterprise. The extension of subways, at enormous cost, has caused great shifts in population and trade, not only from one borough to another, but from the older parts of all the boroughs to newer sections. Such changes have usually been interpreted as signs of progress, since new building anywhere within the city is supposed to increase values and bring in more taxes. But the shifting of values does not add to the sum of the city's assets. Subway extensions and the other changes which have

spread population have imposed an impossible burden upon the city as a whole. In Queens alone, where the population is growing at the rate of 60,000 persons a year, New York is undertaking to build a new city comparable to Philadelphia in population and covering more territory than any other borough. This population is being drawn largely from older sections. To provide all the services needed by this shifting of location of so many New Yorkers will cost much more than the immediate increase in values due to construction. It also means the further decline of sections where such facilities already exist.

With the passage of the Constitutional Amendment permitting the city to finance unification of transit facilities the first steps have been taken toward the solution of one of the city's most pressing problems. It will take time to work out the details and to develop a comprehensive transit program which will coordinate all forms of city transit, but with the municipality in command of its own transit facilities it will be possible to create a really comprehensive unified system which will help to stabilize population.

## Housing and Replanning Substandard Areas

Housing is one of the most important single factors in city planning. Even Manhattan, the business, amusement and industrial center of the Greater City, remains primarily a place of residence. Replanning in the older sections involves rebuilding and rehabilitation in ways which will preclude the recurrence of some of the existing conditions. In the newer sections the task is to create and protect those features of city living which are most desirable.

For the most part, building and rebuilding in the city is now done by private interests, controlled in various ways. Existing laws governing building, the layout of streets, the placing of parks and playgrounds, transportation, the location of schools, zoning and many other elements enter into this guidance. Many of these controls are the direct responsibility of the Planning Commission.

Others are matters to be determined by the legislative and administrative branches of the city government.

New York's more pressing housing needs are for so-called slum clearance and the rehabilitation of older areas. Linked with slum clearance is the problem of providing low-rent housing for those now living in obsolete, unwholesome dwellings. This problem has become so acute that the help of city, state and federal governments has been enlisted in various ways. To achieve this purpose, various agencies have been created, such as the United States Housing Authority, the State Housing Board and the New York City Housing Authority, all possessing specific powers and duties. In addition, the State is expected shortly to provide new funds and new agencies.

The Commission's chief concern is to see that efforts and funds used to clear slums, provide low-rent housing and to rehabilitate old sections of the city are made as effective as is possible in bringing into being the kind of city which is the objective of all City Planning. This means that all such undertakings, whether financed wholly or in part by public funds, or undertaken by private agencies or by combinations of public and private agencies, shall conform to broad plans for the development of the community as a whole as well as to those sections more directly affected.

Initial experiments in public housing had been made in New York before the City Planning Commission took office. First Houses and Harlem Houses had been erected in Manhattan, and the Williamsburg Housing project had been completed in Brooklyn. Sites had already been selected for the Red Hook and Queensbridge projects now under way. Later in the year necessary street changes were referred to the Commission by the Board of Estimate.

## Interference with Necessary Transport Routes

The first of these related to the street system around the Red Hook project. The Commission was cognizant of the considerations governing the selection of the Red Hook and Queensbridge sites. It recognized their advantages; yet the street changes neces-



sary in and around them indicated certain defects from the point of view of those concerned in developing a Master Plan for the city.

Such a Master Plan should show adequate marginal streets around waterfronts to serve shipping and allied industries. In Brooklyn and in Queens marginal railroad facilities, as well as thoroughfares, are essential features in any comprehensive plan for the development of this side of the harbor. Such facilities are precluded by these two new housing projects, both of which, with their recreational areas, straddle the only feasible routes for marginal ways. In the Red Hook area, land formerly acquired by the city for a marginal railroad terminal had previously been turned over to the Park Department for recreational purposes without reserving a right of way for a marginal road next to what was formerly an important shipping and industrial section. At Queensbridge, state land formerly used as a terminal for canal barges was turned over to the city for a park to serve the housing project.

New York may not soon stand in need of additional shipping and industrial facilities and future needs may be taken care of elsewhere around the harbor; but the need for a marginal railroad and marginal ways is as great as ever. Placing these housing developments astride the only practical routes for such marginal ways has made it necessary for the city to find other means of providing needed facilities to serve the Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts.

### Some Problems Raised by the Location of Housing Projects

Certain problems relating to zoning also arose in connection with these two housing projects. In general, zoning seeks to restrict uses in order to protect the character of specified sections of the city. Industry and business are excluded from residential neighborhoods. It is also desirable to exclude residences from industrial and business districts. Many residences have been built or were formerly built in what are now industrial, business or unrestricted districts with the result that residents object to odors, noises, and other disturbances arising from legitimate activities.

In future efforts should be made to obviate these conditions by excluding residences from such districts, or by creating suitable buffer zones where residential districts are adjacent to industrial and business districts.

Still more fundamental in its bearing upon the larger problem of replanning the city is the policy to be pursued concerning the location of sites for housing projects, the relation between land prices in the older sections and those in outlying districts, and the question of building low rent housing on areas which must first be cleared of slums, or of seeking sites on vacant land.

In a report to the Board of Estimate (No. 428, Nov. 9, 1938) recommending certain street changes in the Queensbridge Housing project, the Commission made the following comment:

In recommending approval of the present map the City Planning Commission is, in effect, approving the location of one of the major low-rent housing projects to be constructed in this City under the current housing program of the Federal Government. The City Planning Commission was established too late for a critical review of this particular site either as an isolated project or as a part of a larger housing program for the City. . . .

Although low-rent housing is frequently linked in discussion with slum clearance, the Queensbridge site is virtually vacant land, as were also the Red Hook and Harlem project sites. Similarly, the Williamsburg project, could hardly be described as a genuine slum clearance operation. The various laws under which subsidized housing is being built all contemplate the clearing away of obsolescent areas as well as new construction.

When these earlier projects were undertaken there was much to be said in favor of building on open sites, both for expedition, in order that the projects might get started promptly, and to provide new quarters before families were evicted from their homes. But there has been general agreement among those interested in housing that the time should come for consideration of a shift from vacant sites to the blighted areas of which the City has so many.

No one aware of the City's financial and physical problems, especially in view of the present trend toward a stabil-

ized population, can fail to be disturbed by the problems which will inevitably arise if the process of building on vacant sites is continued too long, and without adequate planning. There probably has never been prepared and perhaps cannot be prepared, an accurate balance sheet or cost statement for operations involving the shift of population from existing neighborhoods to new ones, but it is not difficult to see that such movements involve, in addition to the cost of the new living accommodations, direct charges for street improvements, utilities, recreation and educational facilities and many other public services, most of which have long been in existence in the portions of the City to be abandoned, not overlooking the indirect costs which are more difficult to estimate but none the less real. These are costs which fall on the City itself rather than on the Housing Authority. They are striking enough when a public agency is involved, because in public projects there is usually an attempt to shoulder at least part of the expense for parks and playgrounds. For private developments it is well known to housing officials that the municipality must spend at least as much again as the private developer, and often more, to set the subdivision up in business.

In the opinion of this Commission the building of low-rent housing in new areas in this City has gone as far as it should now be permitted to go. The time has now come for replacing appropriately located obsolescent areas with modern housing for low-income groups, particularly where this can be accomplished within walking distance of opportunities for employment.

It has been conclusively demonstrated that housing projects can be located in extensive portions of the present slum areas of the City at existing prices for land, without involving costs per room in excess of average costs for comparable projects in the rest of the country, and without violating first-class standards as to coverage, light, air and outdoor facilities. The Commission is of the opinion that it is both desirable and practicable at this time to make a start in the clearing of the City's slums, and without prejudicing any particular case, gives notice that its consideration of future sites will be largely conditioned by this point of view. This will be true of private as well as of public projects. This does not mean that all

projects in outlying areas or on vacant land will be regarded as undesirable. There are instances where outlying communities are already equipped with the necessary services; and the growth of population may make some new development necessary. Furthermore, it may be found desirable, as planning becomes more intelligent, to reduce density, change the City's circulatory system and create new peripheral communities, perhaps of the Greenbelt type. But that is another matter. Present activity is of the sort which is creating slums faster than any agency can eliminate them. For the present, until there is general agreement on new areas, the old ones ought to be used rather than progressively sapped by subsidized competition.

The Commission takes cognizance of the fact that the United States Housing Act of 1937 makes it mandatory to eliminate one sub-standard dwelling unit for each new dwelling unit constructed, thus achieving equivalent slum building eradication even when the project is located on entirely vacant land. In point of fact, however, spot demolition or closing of tenements scattered through the many bad housing areas of the City does not eliminate a slum neighborhood. It merely reduces the population density of the slums; and the vacant lots often worsen rather than improve the economic and social defects of the neighborhoods. Only by wholesale demolition of block after block of slum buildings can the evil be removed.

The Commission is also fully aware that the demolition of slums carries with it opportunities and obligations much broader than the mere replacement of bad tenements with modern apartments. It is in connection with such large-scale rehousing operations, and only in connection with them, that opportunities for reorganizing the facilities for movement, recreation and public services of all kinds, including improved highways, more adequate play spaces, and community centers and facilities, can be undertaken in the older parts of the city.

The Planning Commission is the agency which will have to undertake the study and correlation of these numerous opportunities. It cannot look forward to doing so with any expectation of practical results unless the policies established by the various agencies of government with respect to housing permit a start to be made in the replacing of sub-standard



housing near the heart of the City. The imposition of a stringent and inelastic limitation might well be fatal to all plans for slum clearance in New York.

While recognizing the limitations to action under the present law, which requires amortization of a project in 60 years, it should be clear that land and improvements for public housing ought not to be thought of as amortizable on the same scale. The improvements will last for a few decades. The land is being acquired for an indefinite time. The most elementary consideration will show that, if land does not deteriorate in the sense that buildings do, its amortization can quite as logically be spaced over a hundred years, as, say, twenty-five. Lengthening the term opens vast possibilities. The contrast between \$1 a foot and \$10 a foot, to take an extreme, becomes a scarcely measurable difference if the period is a hundred or more years. And the land is being acquired by the public forever. Moreover, its values will be protected by deliberate development and freezing of neighborhood characteristics. The instruments to be used for this purpose are now available in certain areas and are being perfected and extended; they include the management of public projects and the zoning of private ones. There can be no possible argument, from the City's point of view, for insisting on low original cost of land as the determining factor in locating housing.

Other aspects of this same problem were presented in connection with the rezoning of the area covered by the housing project of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in the Bronx. In its report to the Board of Estimate on this subject (No. 388) the Commission said:

In order to achieve moderate rentals the housing project under consideration has been planned at a density of approximately 330 persons per acre. This is comparable to the highest densities found over any existing areas throughout the City. This detracts from the desirability of the projects as a future place to live.

A study of all costs for public improvements made necessary by such projects, on presently unoccupied land, including losses sustained through the abandonment of costly services in areas to be drained of population, may show that the net

result is a loss to the City. Alternately, the concentration of most of the City's population increases in a few such projects might render useless too many of the better situated large undeveloped areas still remaining within the City limits.

## Policies of the Federal Housing Administration

The Metropolitan housing project is the largest of its kind so far undertaken and raises many special problems, but in the aggregate the activities of the Federal Housing Administration in insuring loans for housing purposes are much more far-reaching in their effects upon the changing pattern of the city. Since its creation the FHA has insured loans totaling many millions in New York City. During 1938 the total of insured mortgages amounted to \$100,000,000. Most of these mortgages covered new home construction in Queens and in outlying sections in other boroughs.

Some of the policies and practices of the FHA in stimulating home construction are, within the present framework, commendable. They afford a striking example of the effect of intelligent direction and far-sighted planning in the creation of homes and neighborhoods when the lending agency is concerned with other than immediate profits. Before insuring loans for housing projects, the FHA insists that the subdividing and platting of land, zoning and other requirements meet certain standards set by the Federal government. This is resulting in much more attractive layouts, better construction and sounder home building than is usual when such operations are left solely to speculative builders.

It is pertinent, however, to call attention to certain effects of the FHA policies in the development of outlying sections. The situation curiously enough, was clearly presented by Mr. Stewart McDonald, Federal Housing Administrator, in a statement published in November, 1938, from which the following paragraphs are quoted:

Experience of recent years, indicating that cities probably will grow more slowly in the future, has convinced many public officials that neighborhood deterioration must be prevented. Many cities also are looking for practical means of rehabili-

tating neighborhoods which had been allowed to go to pieces in the expectation that expanding business and industry would soon absorb the area.

Among the most serious results of our failure to provide for orderly municipal development is the premature blighting of established sections of the city and the consequent destruction of taxable land and property values in those neighborhoods.

Our wasteful methods of city growth have needlessly shortened the economic life of thousands of properties and contributed to the destruction of millions of dollars of property values.

Another closely related problem concerns the premature subdivision of land, particularly land outside the city limits. Normal city growth would eventually call for the use of some of this land. However, the practice of subdividing land before it is ripe for development has the dual effect of attracting families from well established neighborhoods in cities, and of creating serious civic problems, such as undue extension of public utilities, the need for new police and fire protection, new schools, and the like.

All in all, with receipts from taxable properties shrinking and new calls being made upon city funds, municipal officials are becoming inclined to use every means at their disposal to check further deterioration of blighted neighborhoods and to devise means of protecting neighborhoods, new and old, which still are free from blight.

Mr. McDonald's statement applies with particular force to New York City, where premature subdividing of land and speculative building is hastening the deterioration of older sections by encouraging the shifting of populations from areas where essential facilities now exist to open sections where they must be provided at an expense to the city, which still must depend upon property and activities in the older sections for revenue. It is to be hoped that the policies outlined in Mr. McDonald's statement, will prevail and that FHA will change its present activities in the outlying areas and turn its attention to those older sections of the city where capital expenditures are needed for new building and for rehabilitation, as well as for the protection of future municipal budgets.

A special service which might be rendered by such an agency as the FHA would be in encouraging and aiding private interests to pool property to permit the rebuilding or rehabilitation of whole blocks or even larger areas where diversified ownership now makes such operation impractical. This would solve many problems now confronting individual owners whose holdings are so small it is not feasible to rebuild to conform to existing building laws and zoning restrictions.

It has been assumed usually that all new building in the city was desirable and construction was encouraged on the theory that improvement of vacant land added to taxable values and was of advantage all around. Better homes are needed and new single family houses and multiple family dwellings are generally preferable to obsolete dwellings, no matter where located. But in many outlying sections apartments are going up which, while conforming to all existing laws and zoning, are by their bulk and height creating conditions comparable to those in so-called slum sections, except for the modern conveniences.

These new structures are accelerating the shifting of population. They are not adding to the total values of real estate within the city. The present process reduces values in one section or one block while raising them in other sections or blocks.<sup>1</sup> The activities of the Planning Commission, in zoning and other matters, are directed toward stabilizing conditions which are now dominated by speculative uncertainty. The accruing benefit will be to the city as a whole, rather than to individuals or sections; but citizens—even those who speculate in realty—must become reconciled to the superior power and interest of the city itself. Private gains at public cost cannot be tolerated.

## The New State Housing Amendment

Passage of the Housing Amendment to the State Constitution would seem to open the way for a general attack on the housing problem in New York, especially in the older sections.

---

<sup>1</sup> This problem is complicated by the lag which always exists between changes in values and official recognition of them.



Section 1 of the Amendment empowers the legislature to prescribe for "low rent housing for persons of low income as defined by law" or for the "clearance, replanning, reconstruction and rehabilitation of substandard and insanitary areas or for both such purposes, and for recreational and other facilities incidental or appurtenant thereto."

It is clear from this section that the new amendment can authorize efforts far beyond any previously made in the clearing of slums and the development of low rent housing. When properly implemented by legislation, the amendment ought to make possible thorough-going replanning of large areas of the City, as well as the construction of low rent housing. The City Planning Commission is the only agency of the municipal government authorized to undertake planning in such a general way. And it expects to be involved in many activities as a result of forthcoming legislation.

New York City may secure in the new laws certain broad powers not now enjoyed. Of first importance is the power of excess condemnation for housing which can permit the replanning of areas larger than are actually required for a given housing project at a specified time. Section 8 of the new constitution permits excess condemnation for the general purposes of the amendment and empowers the City or its agencies to lease or sell such excess land with restrictions to preserve and protect the improvements. Section 9 also permits excess condemnation, under conditions imposed by the legislature, of property ultimately necessary but not immediately or temporarily required for a given project. Power to lease or sell excess land acquired, or to condemn land in advance of actual building needs, is very broad.

The amendment makes only indirect provision for the use of any but State funds for housing. The City may grant tax exemptions or subsidies to such agencies as limited dividend corporations but State funds are limited to projects for housing low-income groups. Whether the City may condemn land and lease or sell it to insurance companies or other corporations willing to invest in moderate rent dwellings under conditions satisfactory to the City

is not yet known. How much money will be made available to New York City under legislation to implement the new amendment is at this writing also unknown. But in any comprehensive scheme for the replanning of large sub-standard areas much greater sums will be needed than can be secured from present available Federal, state and municipal funds. Limited dividend companies, savings banks and insurance companies might well be encouraged to take part in such comprehensive plans. Insurance companies, in particular, have large sums which might be used in this manner if ways were opened to them to secure building sites in slum areas. By the use of excess condemnation and the remapping of areas to reduce street space, the City might lease or sell to such concerns land which could be utilized profitably to both, and aid in redeeming slum areas. In practically all of these areas there is room for many kinds of new housing, ranging from subsidized low rent dwellings to moderate priced apartments.

The development of parks and playgrounds in connection with new housing is essential. This is recognized specifically in the language of Section 1 of the Amendment. The creation of better traffic systems is also essential and provision should be made for public buildings, such as schools, health centers, and so on. They are all parts of one problem—that of providing suitable amenities for urban living.

## The Year's Experience with Zoning

The Charter recognizes the close relationship between zoning and planning by entrusting to the Commission special responsibilities in zoning matters. It establishes the Commission as the agency charged with the holding of statutory hearings, and provides that its determinations in this field shall be final unless reversed by a three-quarters vote of the Board of Estimate, although unanimous approval is required where there is a twenty percent protest. The Commission is also given large opportunities to initiate zoning changes on its own account.

New York City early assumed leadership in the field of zoning as a result of its adoption of the first comprehensive scheme in this country in 1916; yet experience has revealed serious weaknesses in the city's zoning, and the passage of time has caused it to become antiquated. In this the city has suffered from having pioneered.

Among the courses open to the Commission to rectify existing conditions are piecemeal amendment, both of the maps and the Zoning Resolution itself, and comprehensive revision, including the substituting of a totally new resolution and maps for the old ones, to accord with changed conditions. During its first year the Commission has had both courses under consideration. In the coming year it is hoped to amend the old resolution and to begin the construction of a wholly new one.

Early in January the Board of Estimate referred to the Commission a number of zoning petitions on which it had taken no action. Section 201 of the Charter provides that applications for changes in zoning may be filed by taxpayers only during the month of April, but the Commission, acting under that part of Section 200 giving it the power to initiate such proceedings, considered the petitions referred to it by the Board of Estimate and took action on those which seemed in the public interest or which were deemed necessary to afford private property owners protection.

Most of the old petitions sought changes which would give greater protection to residential areas, and in general the changes recommended were more restrictive. During the year the Commission also initiated a number of zone changes. The most extensive rezoning initiated in Manhattan was for a large area on the lower East Side, extending from East 12th Street to Brooklyn Bridge east of Avenue C, Pitt and Division Streets. A public hearing on changes in the Use Map was held on March 16. The Commission took no final action on this matter, pending the presentation of appropriate changes as to area and height in the district. At its final meeting for the year, all three proceedings were restored to the calendar for fixing dates at which hearings would be held.

## Detrimental Uses in Residential Areas

The problem presented on the lower East Side, as in many old sections, is that of a section overbuilt with structures which have become obsolete, yet have not been replaced. It is predominantly residential in character yet large areas remain unrestricted or are given over to uses which are detrimental in a residential section. As a part of any plan to rehabilitate such areas rezoning is essential not only to protect residences but to obviate, so far as is possible, a recurrence of the worst features now found in these older neighborhoods.

Another aspect of this same problem was presented in connection with the rezoning of Brooklyn Heights to limit the height of future buildings. Although this section has always been predominantly residential it was placed in 2½, 2 and 1½ times districts in 1916. The Commission recommended placing the area in a one-times height district and a D area district.<sup>1</sup> Many buildings of excessive bulk and height have been built in the section, but old residences still predominate as to land coverage. The Commission recognized that the older types of homes will probably give way to multiple dwellings, but felt that further restrictions as to height and bulk were necessary to prevent congestion, already serious, from becoming worse, because of the unusually narrow streets and the absence of parks, playgrounds or other open spaces.

Height in itself is not objectionable and multiple dwellings of great height and bulk do not in themselves reduce the amenities of a neighborhood. But unlimited construction of buildings, in close proximity, without provision for open spaces, is a serious fault in city building. The city cannot in reason be expected to provide the equivalent of front yards in the form of parks and the equivalent of back yards in the form of playgrounds, or to construct streets wide enough to accommodate the traffic and parking space required to serve such highly concentrated populations. This is a costly way of repairing mistakes which proper zoning would

---

<sup>1</sup> In which from about sixty to eighty per cent of the lot area may be covered by building.

have prevented. Zoning should limit private uses not only in the interest of the public but to prevent private uses from becoming mutually destructive. It is one device by which the city may modify the bad effects of competitive building.

## Zoning the Metropolitan Housing Project

Some entirely new zoning problems were presented in connection with the extensive housing project of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company already referred to. This is the largest housing development of the kind so far projected. Plans called for the creation of an entirely new, and more or less self-contained community, with a special street system and an elaborate arrangement of multiple dwellings, stores, garages, parks, playgrounds and other features.

Existing zoning regulations did not contemplate the kind of groupings planned in this project. Area and height regulations, as applied in the city at large, had no real meaning in such a plan. Some of the buildings are to reach beyond one-and-a-half-times the width of streets. They are, however, to be set back sufficiently to overcome any objection. The coverage of the area as a whole is so small, relatively, that the open spaces provided exceed the more restrictive regulations as to bulk of buildings. In the matter of uses, the concentration of business largely in one section of the project, with smaller zones to accommodate a few stores, establishes a pattern entirely different from that usually presented. This is true, also, as to garages, which are provided in separate buildings in three different sections of the residential area. In its report to the Board of Estimate (No. 388) the Commission made the following comment:

The plan for this housing project covers an area of about 130 acres and contemplates the provision of accommodations for some 43,000 people. In developing the design it was found that by using super-blocks and abandoning the rectangular street system the area of public streets could be reduced to 13 per cent of the gross area, which is less than half of that in the traditional New York City layout. The public expense of maintaining pavement and of cleaning



streets is likewise reduced by half; also, in consequence of this and of the reduced coverage of the land it has been possible to provide in the design not only open space but generous recreation and other community facilities. These are all assets in any city but especially in one in which such advantages have until now been disgracefully restricted in the most thickly populated districts. It also shows a tendency to shift from the City the necessity for maintaining front- and back-yards for private properties.

In the preparation of a plan of this character there is also opportunity to provide other necessary community services such as shopping centers and garage facilities in a manner both convenient and attractive. It is not to be expected that these elements of the community plan will conform to the existing zoning districts, which are based on an entirely different street plan. Consequently, the Commission after satisfying itself as to the merit of the design and the substantial public benefits to be derived therefrom appears to be warranted in initiating the amendments to the zoning maps necessary to permit these services in appropriate locations.

In detail, these modifications of the zoning maps to facilitate a large scale housing project necessarily conform to the framework of the present zoning resolution. It is apparent, however, that this existing framework is not readily adaptable to such large scale projects; and that fundamental changes in the zoning of the City should before long be considered. Pending modification, changes such as are herein initiated approach as close as is possible the desired regulation. In acting favorably in this case the Commission also indicates its willingness to consider similar requests for zoning changes in connection with other large-scale, super-block projects \* \* \*.

\* \* \* This Commission was consulted too late by the insurance company involved in this instance. It nevertheless has sought to cooperate in assuring future residents in this project the amenities they ought to have. It has anticipated that land speculation around the project, by those having no vested interests in it, apart from those having a long-time ownership interest, would create a situation in which the zoning restrictions which ought to be imposed would be difficult. The builders of the project were advised that they ought to protect



the borders by wider purchases. This they refused to do. The Commission then sought to zone these borders against the over-development of business, certain to result in deterioration of the properties. The expected protest has arisen and the Commission felt it advisable to limit its zoning to the project itself, certain as it is that neither the speculators themselves in the long run, nor the future residents of this community will gain from its withdrawal.

## Avenue J

On May 25 the Commission authorized a public hearing on a proposed amendment of the Use Map, by changing from a residence district to a business district the property abutting on both sides of Avenue J, to a depth of 100 feet, from East 16th Street to East 17th Street, in the borough of Brooklyn. The Commission approved this change.

Although the petitioners owned 95 per cent of the property directly affected, protests were received from owners of 80 per cent of the area immediately adjacent. In making its decision the Commission took into consideration the special conditions prevailing in this immediate vicinity. Avenue J is zoned for business on the west of the railroad, which has a station at this location. The street has been widened to accommodate a large volume of through traffic, and there is congestion around the station, where buses take on and discharge passengers. All of these factors make this particular block undesirable for private residences. Mindful of the attitude of the courts toward zoning which precludes the use of property in the only way it may be profitably utilized, the Commission was unanimous in voting for an extension of the business zone for one block easterly on Avenue J. It was apparent at the hearing that much of the opposition was based on the fear that if the business zone is extended for one block it would soon be further extended. This has often happened in the past. It has sometimes been considered also that by permitting a given use at one point on a street it would be discriminatory not to permit similar uses for the entire street. This may account

for the excessive zoning for business throughout the city, where long streets, extending through residential neighborhoods and paralleling other business streets, have been zoned for business throughout their entire length, regardless of the need and to the detriment of residential property. It seems much more logical to group business uses in residential neighborhoods and limit the areas to size proportionate to need. If assurance could be given that such areas would not be extended, much of the opposition should disappear. In the case of the single block on Avenue J, the Commission felt that it was logical to permit the extension of business for one block to allow for a needed addition to business uses and to permit profitable use of the property adjacent to the railroad station. The guarantee of limitation was considered to lie in the Commission's reasonableness. The Board of Estimate failed to concur.

## The "G" Zone

For some years it has been apparent that the New York Zoning Resolution did not permit adequate control over the area covered by residential structures. Various methods of approach had been suggested. The Commission prepared the following amendment to the Administrative Code, which was introduced in the City Council on April 26, 1938:

### A LOCAL LAW

To amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to the power of the city planning commission to regulate the density of population.

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Section 200-1.0 of the administrative code of the city of New York is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 200-1.0. City planning commission to regulate the height and bulk of buildings and areas of yards, courts and open spaces, and density of population.

The commission, subject to the provisions of sections two hundred and two hundred one of the charter, shall have power

to regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings and to regulate and determine the area of yards, courts and other open spaces, and to regulate the density of population in any given area. The commission, subject to the same limitations, may divide the city into districts of such number, shape and area as it may deem best suited to carry out such purposes. The regulations as to height and bulk of buildings and the area of yards, courts and other open spaces, and as to the density of population in any given area, shall be uniform for each class of buildings throughout each district. The regulations in one or more districts may differ from those in other districts. Such regulations shall be designed to secure safety from fire and other dangers and to promote the public health and welfare, including, so far as conditions may permit, provisions for adequate light, air and convenience of access. The commission shall pay reasonable regard to the character of buildings erected in each district, the value of the land and the use to which it may be put, to the end that such regulations may promote public health, safety and welfare and the most desirable use for which the land of each district may be adapted and may tend to conserve the value of the buildings and may enhance the value of land throughout the city.

Section 2. This local law shall take effect immediately.

This law has not been considered by the Council.

The Commission, on May 11, 1938 (Cal. No. 43) initiated a proposed amendment of the Building Zone Resolution designed to establish a "G" Area District, in which residences were to be restricted exclusively to single family dwellings. This matter was the subject of a public hearing on May 25, 1938. The meeting was recessed to June 1, 1938, at which time the following resolution was adopted, and filed with the Secretary of the Board of Estimate pursuant to the provisions of Section 22 of the New York City Charter:

RESOLVED, by the City Planning Commission, that the resolution adopted July 25, 1916 and amended April 23, 1937 entitled "a resolution regulating and limiting the height and bulk of buildings hereafter erected and regulating and determining the area of yards, courts and other open spaces and regulating and restricting the location of trades and indus-

tries and the location of buildings designed for specified uses and establishing the boundaries of districts for the said purposes" be and the same hereby is amended as follows:

Article I, § 1 (o) *A "family" is any number of persons living and cooking together on the premises as a single house-keeping unit.*

Article II, § 3: (1) Dwellings, which *except as hereinafter provided in Section 16-A in a G area district*, shall include dwellings for one or more families and boarding houses and also hotels which have thirty or more sleeping rooms.

Article IV, § 10; Area Districts: "For the purpose of regulating and determining the area of yards, courts and other open spaces for buildings hereafter erected, the City of New York is hereby divided into [~~six~~] *seven* classes of area districts; A, B, C, D, E [~~and~~] *F and G*; as shown on the amended area district map which accompanies this resolution and is hereby declared to be a part hereof."

Article IV, § 16-A, *G Districts*: (a) *In a G district no dwelling shall be erected or altered other than for occupancy by a single family.* (b) *In a G district no portion of any building shall be erected nearer than 20 feet to the building line of the street on which it fronts.* (c) *In a G district no portion of any building shall be erected nearer than 10 feet to either side line of the plot except that a one-story building or extension used exclusively for a garage may extend to within 5 feet of one side line provided that such building shall be at least 70 feet from the building line of the street, and except that on a plot not more than 50 feet in width any building may extend to within 5 feet of one side line and to within 10 feet of the other side line.* (d) *In a G district no building shall be erected nearer than 15 feet to the rear line of the plot, except that a one-story building or extension used exclusively for a garage may extend to within 5 feet of such rear line of the plot.* (e) *In a G district no building inclusive of a garage shall occupy at the ground level more than 35 per cent of the area of the plot, and above a level of 14 feet above the ground level more than 25 per cent of the area of the plot.* (f) *In a G district no building shall be erected which does not comply with all the provisions in force in an F district.;*

Article IV, § 18 (b): (3) "In an F or a G district such least dimension shall be five feet";

Article IV, § 19 (a) “\* \* \* And provided that in an E district a one-family residence, detached on all sides and having on one side a side yard of a clear and unobstructed width of not less than five feet, may have a cornice or eave projecting not more than 2 feet 6 inches into a side yard and on the opposite side, with the further provision that in an F or a G district such cornice or eave, or a porte cochere having a height of less than 18 feet, may project not more than 3 feet into both side yards.”;

And in the Appendix, Amended Area District Map designations: (A) (B) (C) (D) (E) (F) (G) are symbols for district classifications as defined in the zoning resolutions.

(Explanation—Matter in *italics* is new; matter in brackets is old wording to be omitted.)

The Board of Estimate considered this amendment on June 16, 1938. On July 13, the Commission authorized public hearings concerning proposed amendments which would change certain neighborhoods from F to the new G districts. One of these areas was that known as Fieldston, in the Bronx, a second was that known as Prospect Park South, in Brooklyn, and a third was an area known generally as Jamaica Estates, in Queens. The proposed changes as related to Fieldston and Prospect Park South were adopted on October 11, with some minor modifications as to Fieldston. Opposition developed at the hearing on the proposed changes in Jamaica Estates and this matter was laid over for further study. In its report to the Board of Estimate, dated October 11, 1938, on the Fieldston rezoning, the Commission said:

The proposed amendment would change an extensive territory now zoned as an F district and largely developed with one-family homes, to a G district. In a G district the development is limited to buildings erected for occupancy by a single family. It was anticipated by the framers of the zoning resolution that apartment buildings would not be built in the more restrictive area classifications, namely: the E and F area districts. Experience has shown, however, that the restrictions for these districts did not prevent the erection of multi-family dwellings upon large plots.

Soon after its organization, the Planning Commission received a petition from residents of Fieldston, a single-family



residential community in The Bronx, requesting that steps be taken to restrict it to single-family dwellings. Facts presented by the petitioners, subsequently verified by field inspection, revealed that Fieldston is an exceptionally homogeneous single-family house development, demarcated by obvious physical boundaries, within which it would be altogether reasonable to preserve and protect single-family house development.

Under the City's existing zoning resolution, the only immediate recourse lay in the establishment of a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -times height zone, which in conjunction with the existing F area district might be expected to prevent the construction of multiple dwellings. Such a proceeding was initiated by the City Planning Commission (C.P. 134) and made the subject of a public hearing on March 16, 1938.

Following the public hearing, it became apparent that it would be preferable to establish a new classification within which the expectations of the framers of the zoning resolution in respect to the more restrictive area districts might actually be realized.

Accordingly, there was initiated by the Commission an amendment to the zoning resolution to be known as article IV, section 16-A, establishing a G area district, in which dwellings would be limited to single-family houses, and including appropriate front, side and rear yard provisions. The Board of Estimate considered this amendment on June 16, 1938 and it became effective July 6, 1938.

New York is commonly regarded as a City of multiple dwellings. The Borough of Manhattan, with approximately 98 per cent of its residents living in apartments and tenements, fully bears out this conclusion. For the total population of the five boroughs comprising the Greater City, the ratio is much lower, about two-thirds of the people living in multiple dwellings, and one-third in single- and two-family houses.

Considered on the basis of land area, and only taking into account land at present in actual use for residential purposes, the apartment house loses its dominance both in the City and certain of the boroughs. The residential land of the five boroughs is divided about equally between multiple dwellings and the more open forms of development.



Turning to the individual boroughs, Manhattan and The Bronx are dominated by apartment dwellings on an area basis, some 70 per cent of the existing residential land in The Bronx being in apartments. But Brooklyn shows approximately half its area in single- and two-family houses, while Queens, with about 80 per cent, and Richmond, with about 95 per cent, are overwhelmingly open in their development. Taking the city as a whole, on an area basis, only one-third of the present residential land is developed with multiple dwellings, and two-thirds with single and double houses. With the continuing development of new areas, this preponderance of the more open types of residence will doubtless increase.

The desire of people to live in open neighborhoods not subject to invasion by apartments is reflected in the inclusion of single-family house districts in the vast majority of zoning ordinances throughout the country. The establishment of such districts has been repeatedly sustained by the courts, even when carrying provisions for lots up to an acre or more per house.

In accordance with a request by local residents and property owners, the Commission on July 13, 1938, initiated a proceeding to establish the G district classification for the community known as Fieldston. In view of the existing development, in this section, the desire of the owners to protect its present character appears reasonable and the proposed amendment is considered justifiable.

The most extensive and in many ways the most significant rezoning initiated by the Commission during its first year was in connection with new parkways. These changes were undertaken at the request of Park Commissioner Moses from sketches prepared under his direction. The areas affected were wide belts along both sides of the rights of way of the Bronx River and Hutchinson River Parkway Extensions in the Bronx, the Bronx and Queens approaches of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, and along the Cross Island, Southern and Shore parkways in Queens and Brooklyn. The Commission also rezoned the areas adjacent to the new Rockaway improvement.

The new parkways extend for over forty miles through vary-

ing terrains. Much of the rights of way traverse undeveloped sections or districts of miscellaneous use. That the land adjacent to the parkways will be transformed by the improvement may be taken for granted. Over large stretches in the outlying sections the new parkways will be the first and only improvements ever made in the sections. Areas left undetermined when the city was originally zoned in 1916, or designated as "unrestricted" merely because some isolated industry had been established or because of the nature of the land will be given a definite character.

The primary purpose of rezoning these areas is to afford protection to the parkways, but the effect should be much more far-reaching. Experience has demonstrated that construction of parkways within the city stimulates building of residences of the most desirable type and in general an increase in amenities within their sphere of influence. This has been notable, for instance, along Grand Central and the Henry Hudson parkways. When protected by adequate zoning these ribbon parks provide the foundation for attractive neighborhood developments. To withhold the kind of protection given by zoning would be to nullify a large part of the value of the expensive parkways.

The pattern followed has been that laid down by the zoning along Grand Central Parkway. Use is generally restricted to residence, with the area districts ranging from "D" to "F." Heights are limited to  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 1 times the width of the streets on which the houses front.

With buses operating on the service roads of these parkways the new areas will tend to spread developments which have heretofore followed rapid transit lines and concentrated around stations. This will create a new pattern. Properly zoned, these sections may avoid the creation of conditions which now prevail in many relatively new sections where there is a recurrence of the congestion found in the older sections of the city.

Where the parkways traverse districts with a limited amount of industry attention was paid to the problem of preserving existing industrial development. Certain problems were presented where

low-lying land was zoned for residence purposes, although the present prospects do not encourage such developments. In some instances the Commission modified the proposed zoning to protect owners. In others it qualified its resolution by stating that its action was taken without prejudice to any proposed rezoning of specified lands which might be made in future. In the Rockaway Peninsula the rezoning was to protect the extensive new seaside park and drive.

In extent of area covered—over 11,000 acres—and variety of rezoning in the city, these changes establish a new record for action within a single year. Yet they represent but a meagre beginning in correcting the wide discrepancy between the areas actually used for business and industry in the city and those zoned for these purposes. Similarly they represent slight progress toward establishing a realistic relationship between permitted building bulks and those which may be anticipated and should be encouraged in future. Nor do they contribute greatly to the modernization of New York's system of zoning as such, or to its adaptation to the needs and demands of future building operations, especially to the large-scale, single-ownership, superblock type of development of which there has been so far an all too small beginning.

For all these reasons, the Commission, as has been noted, is preparing for more comprehensive zoning revisions. Reserving judgment for the moment as between amendment of the present regulations and substitution of a virtually new system, the Commission will shortly initiate a considerable number of amendments to the Zoning Resolution. Most of these amendments are routine changes to bring the language of the Resolution into conformity with the new Charter; a few would effect changes in substance which seem necessary or desirable at this time.

Among the problems which will require solution, in addition to the general readjustment of uses and bulks of building already mentioned, there may be mentioned: Prevention of residential structures in the areas set aside for industry; satisfactory handling of the remoter parts of the city, in which ultimate development is a

matter of great uncertainty as yet; encouragement of a desirable amount of recentralization of business and industry, in the form of fairly self-contained communities, for which there is ample opportunity within the city's limits.

All of these problems, and doubtless many others which will be revealed in the course of the preparation of the Master Plan, will have implications for the future zoning of the city. In view of their complexity it is obvious that this is a field in which the best efforts of the Commission will need to be supplemented, interpreted and broadly understood by the public and private agencies concerned, and by the citizens at large.

## Health, Hospitals and Welfare

The problems involved in the establishment of adequate health, hospital and welfare services for a city the size of New York are generally well known. The City Planning Commission is cognizant of these and is aware of the administrative and financial difficulties to be encountered in coping with the situation.

The New York City Charter, under section 197A, titled Master Plan of the City, which has already been quoted, calls upon the Commission, among other things, to "prepare \* \* a master plan of the city which shall show \* \* sites for public buildings and structures \* \* and such other features, changes and additions as will provide for the improvement of the city and its future growth and development and afford adequate facilities for the \* \* health and welfare of its population." The Commission takes seriously its responsibilities in carrying out these provisions.

Elsewhere in this report the general development of a master plan is discussed and, although such a plan is not available at present nor conceivably could have been available during the first year, it is the policy of the Commission, as far as it can, to relate all proposals for the establishment of health, hospital and welfare facilities to other services of the city.

A master plan will indicate the long range development of property uses such as transportation lines, waterfront developments,

arterial highways, industrial and commercial areas, residential sections, and the like. The City will attempt to maintain the desirable features of this plan through proper zoning and through the budgetary provision for related facilities. There is, however, one factor which, even if intangible, is highly important: this is population. There is to be considered not only the gross population of New York City and its changes, in various parts of the city; but also the many millions of people who daily move about the city on their customary rounds, the thousands who seasonally change their place of residence, and the millions who pour in and out of the city every day. This vast multitude has never been static and even where characteristic areas have been in existence for some time, the types of persons and their economic and social characteristics undergo many changes. It is also apparent that local boundaries are unimportant in population movements, disease control, seasonal illnesses, industrial hazards and general epidemics. It is, therefore, apparent that an approach to this problem must be through knowledge of fundamental factors concerning population.

The Commission has carefully studied and attempted to analyze the health and welfare problems of the City through various reports and data recently prepared by both public and private agencies in this field.

The reports of the Commissioner of Health, the exhaustive statistical data concerning health factors prepared by the Committee on Neighborhood Health Development, and the Health Department's comprehensive program for the construction of district health center buildings and substations (based on the officially adopted health district plan), have served as a guide for the Commission. The guidance of the Commissioner of Hospitals and his recommendations and suggestions have been of great value in understanding the hospital problem. The recent hospital survey of Greater New York is as comprehensive a study as any community could hope to have, and makes it unnecessary for the Commission to spend time or money in doing additional survey or



research work in this field. The recently created Hospital Council of Greater New York included in its constitution provisions for a member of the City Planning Commission to serve on its planning committee. In welfare work the Commissioner of the Department of Welfare has from time to time indicated the acute problems in this field caused by the depression and has outlined his views concerning permanent problems. The Chief Medical Examiner has presented a proposal for the expansion of the services of his office and the establishment of an Institute of Forensic Medicine to make available, to a greater extent, for medical legal investigations, research, crime detection and teaching, the valuable material which passes through this office. Private health, hospital and welfare agencies are likewise directly concerned with the growth and development of the City and have indicated their desire to obtain information which would guide them in the establishment of facilities and types of services to be rendered.

There are probably no other fields of service to the people in which the public and private agencies have such a wide distribution of responsibility and it is this, together with the administrative and financial difficulties, which makes it difficult to bring all these forces together on common ground and within a unified program.

The health, medical and welfare services, public and private, eventually come into the lives of practically every inhabitant of the city. The costs, both tangible and intangible, run into many millions. The four major city departments involved in this work have operating budgets alone totalling 75 million dollars, which cost does not include all the forms of direct and indirect relief, private health and hospital costs, fees paid to private physicians and the huge economic loss through illness. A compilation of the full economic burden of health, medical care and welfare would be staggering; it is for this reason that the Commission recognizes the great necessity for developing a comprehensive plan for the coordination of this work.

The principle that health, medical care and welfare services must be developed on a community basis is now accepted. This



would indicate a greater decentralization than in the past. The established medical centers and other existing centralized facilities are probably adequate for teaching and research. Emergencies are being well taken care of generally; agreement, however, on a community program which considers all the aspects of physical and mental health and well being is needed. As the general program for the development of such services in communities grows, it is increasingly important that all agencies involved should receive accurate and helpful information, as far as is practicable, on various data concerning community needs and probable growth and development of the City.

The establishment of health, hospital and welfare facilities throughout the City is unquestionably urgent, but is extremely costly both in capital expenditure and annual operation. In order to develop such services with some degree of assurance of proper location, it is essential that adequate community studies be made to determine the location, plan and scope and type of facilities to be provided.

It is reasonable to assume that when a master plan of the City is prepared and officially adopted, it will be possible to show thereon various community developments and types of facilities to be provided, and to make this plan more permanent through logical mapping, comprehensive zoning and the establishment of adequate community services. All agencies in this field have felt such a need for many years past; they have curtailed certain activities, delayed construction of facilities and felt themselves handicapped generally through the lack of a definite pattern for City development.

It is the objective of the Commission, therefore, to prepare and make available such a plan as soon as is possible, indicating thereon adequate facilities for health, medical care and welfare. The Commission will approach this master plan by taking into consideration all the interrelated factors in the establishment of such facilities. With such information available during the consideration of the capital budget and five-year program, it is hoped

that a well conceived and coordinated program of services may be established for the community.

## Public Schools

The Commission has been made acutely aware of problems relating to the public schools and city colleges without being able, during its first year, to offer much constructive aid. It would seem, from the recent experiences of the Commission, that there is an opportunity to work out a much more satisfactory method for meeting the needs of the city's youth.

The Commission came into direct official contact with the educational problem through requests submitted by the Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education for projects sought to be included in the proposed capital budget for 1939 and the 1940-1944 program, when demands were made for capital expenditures quite beyond resources available for these purposes.

The first and only school site referred to the Commission during 1938 was for P. S. 114 in the Bronx. On February 3, 1938, the Board of Estimate sent to the Commission a communication from the Board of Education submitting three alternative sites for this school. After an investigation the Commission felt that what was needed was a new procedure in this respect by which the Board of Education would recommend areas within which, after the Commission's approval, the Director of Real Estate could seek a site.

An arrangement was made between the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Parks under which a part of Macombs Dam Park was transferred to the Board of Education. The City subsequently acquired and turned over to the Park Department a comparable plot of land at East 136th Street and Alexander Avenue for a playground. This arrangement was subsequently approved, but with certain reservations which it was believed should have weight in the selection of future sites for schools. These reservations were set forth in a report to the Board of Estimate on May 25, 1938 (No. 209) in which the following passages occur:

Schools and playparks have a natural affinity which should be recognized in the City Plan, particularly as it relates to these features. School buildings need light, air and spaciousness that come with proximity to parks, as well as the play facilities that may be developed therein. Similarly, small local parks may well look to adjacent schools to supply the patronage which is their reason for existence. For all these reasons the arrangement by which an elementary school building is to be erected within the actual boundary of Macombs Dam Park in The Bronx is both significant and commendable. On the other hand, the actual site to be occupied by this school leaves much to be desired in comparison with the plan which might have been worked out in conformity with the earlier report of the City Planning Commission. Being located on the northern extremity of Macombs Dam Park, the school is practically on the boundary of the school district, being accessible primarily to approximately 325 children in the northerly half, leaving approximately 410 children who will have to traverse practically the entire length of the district to the extreme northerly end to go to school. Furthermore, this result was wholly unnecessary in this case by reason of the availability of other centrally located sites within the same park.

The site also leaves much to be desired in relation to street traffic. The junction of Jerome Avenue, Boscobel Avenue and 167th Street is a busy one, upon which the two streets bounding the triangular school site converge. Greater freedom from traffic could have been obtained elsewhere in the park.

Finally, the fundamental relationship between the school building and the play facilities of the park is at fault. The school building should be located where the children both before, during and after school sessions could most readily utilize these facilities. Instead it is proposed to be placed at the end of the park furthest removed from active recreation.

It seems fitting in this connection to call attention to the Report of the Architectural Commission, appointed by the Board of Education in 1936 to study this subject of school architecture, sites, playgrounds and related matters. After an extended inquiry, for which the Board of Estimate and Apportionment appropriated \$30,000, the expert commission

on December 13, 1937 made its recommendations. Declaring that "The selection of a suitable site for any building project is fundamental to proper planning and design" and that a large majority of the school sites in the City of New York are inadequate in area, the report of the Architectural Commission made the following recommendations, among others:

"Larger sites should be acquired in order to

- (a) Enable the elements of the plans to be properly arranged;
- (b) Prevent narrow courts;
- (c) Permit buildings to be set back from street lines to minimize noise and provide pleasing landscape treatment;
- (d) Prevent an excessive number of stories.

"Sites should be located:

So as to limit travel distances to one-half to three-quarters of a mile for elementary pupils; three-quarters of a mile for Junior High pupils; and one to one and a half miles for Senior High pupils.

At least one block away from noisy thoroughfares.

A reasonable distance from railroads, manufacturing plants or similar sources of disturbing noises.

In proximity to city park recreation areas where school property is not available for recreational purposes.

"Sites should be selected for:

Shape which will provide a proper basic plan for the building, ample setback from the street and proper recreation area.

Orientation which will permit east and west exposure for the maximum number of classrooms.

"A comprehensive program should be developed for the landscape treatment of present and future sites."

The report further recommended that

"The Board of Education and the Park Department should cooperate in locating schools adjacent to existing park recreation areas or in locating new park recreation areas adjacent to present school sites. By means of such cooperation, the recreation areas recommended by the Commission can be obtained. Cooperation should be established between the Board of Education and the City Planning Com-

mission. In the development of a city plan, if the Neighborhood Unit of Planning is adopted by the City Planning Commission, the school should be considered as an important factor in the size of the unit."

The City Planning Commission is in complete accord with these recommendations of the Architectural Commission and believes that they should be given consideration in the selection of all future school sites. No data were submitted in this instance indicating the size of the lot, the area to be covered, the number of stories of the school building, or any other important factor relating to the recommendations stated above.

For all these reasons the City Planning Commission is of the opinion that a truly exceptional opportunity for the location of a building for Public School 114 is being overlooked.

The Commission feels that emphasis should be placed on the recommendations of the Architectural Commission, especially those relating to the close cooperation between the Board of Education and the Commission in the selection of school sites. The Board of Estimate has in recent years followed a policy of purchasing larger sites to provide adequate playgrounds and open space. It is illogical and expensive to provide separately for playgrounds to be under the Park Department and under the Board of Education when they are to serve the same neighborhoods and the same children. There has been a certain amount of cooperation between the school authorities and the Park Department in this matter, as well as in the operation of playgrounds, but much closer coordination is not only desirable but absolutely necessary if the city within its limited means is to make headway in providing the playgrounds needed, especially in congested neighborhoods.

The size and location of school sites are important, but there are other features such as the shape of the sites which are likewise important. The site finally provided for P. S. 114 is preferable to any others proposed and marks a commendable step in cooperative endeavor between the Board of Education and the Department of Parks, yet the site selected falls far short of the requirements



as set forth by the Architectural Commission. This is the more regrettable since an opportunity was presented to secure a location which would have been ideal for the purpose without unduly encroaching on park land.

It has not often happened, but it is possible to provide school sites which are too large, or at least much larger than are necessary for school purposes, including adequate playgrounds. This is apt to occur in outlying sections and in special cases where it is possible to secure large plots of land at reasonable prices. To carry this too far would be to create the anomaly of a few schools possessing an overabundance of open space while the great majority of schools were suffering from cramped conditions. Newer sections of the city have been more liberally supplied with parks and playgrounds and it is unnecessary in some districts to duplicate such facilities in school plans. The city can not afford such duplications so long as there is pressing need for new schools and replacements in older sections.

These and other considerations have led the Commission to suggest that this whole subject be jointly studied by the Board of Education and the Commission. It may be found that a somewhat different approach is needed. Bearing in mind the pressing needs of the city for land for branch libraries, health centers and various other purposes, as well as for schools, playgrounds and parks, every possibility for combining such facilities should be explored. There would be a great gain in many ways, as well as considerable saving, if schools could be planned as the principal units in neighborhood centers, and, where possible, other civic needs provided in the immediate vicinity. There are a number of areas in the city where such centers could be planned and sufficient land acquired to permit the gradual construction of the necessary buildings.

The size of schools and their locations are, of course, matters of great concern to the Commission, both from a budgetary and a city planning point of view. The Commission realizes that the Board of Education, with its large staff and long experience, is the agency best qualified to determine questions of this kind, as well



as the relative needs of existing sections. But the school population is becoming stabilized as to numbers and the more pressing problems relate to the shifting of populations from one section of the city to another. This is a matter which must command increasing attention from the Commission, which hopes to cooperate with the school authorities in working out plans for the future which will advance the community toward the goal of really satisfactory school facilities for all its youth. The Commission hopes within the next year to digest the recommendations of the Architectural Commission, and the more recent report of the Regent's Inquiry Into the Character and Cost of Public Education in the State of New York.

### The Needs of the Board of Higher Education

The Commission's only first-hand knowledge of the needs and plans of the Board of Higher Education came through the discussion of budgetary requests at the departmental hearings in preparing the proposed capital budget for 1939 and the 1940-1944 program. Many needs were manifest and considerable sums were asked, but no comprehensive program, involving specific plans, was presented. It is hoped that such a program can be worked out during the coming year.

New York is the greatest educational center in the country, yet much can and must be done by the city government to improve the educational facilities, from kindergartens through the schools and colleges and universities, and in the field of adult education. As in other matters, the great graduate institutions are concentrated in Manhattan, while population has shifted to Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. There is need for a unification of the institutions of higher education, consolidating the graduate institutions, leaving undergraduate work to city colleges and other institutions which can be brought into an undergraduate system. An urban college need not have all the facilities of an institution in a remote college town, and it should be possible to provide higher education for nominal fees, with subsidies for needy students whose qualifications assure their fitness to go on with academic training.

## New Parkways and Arterial Highways

During the past year there was unusual activity in the development of plans and the actual construction of parkways and main arterial highways. Some of these projects were well advanced before the Commission came into existence. Others were new. All of the projects were needed and most of them fit into a general scheme which should greatly facilitate the handling of traffic in this congested area. Outstanding was the initiation of a comprehensive parkway running through the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn. This proposal was first made public by Commissioner Moses in November, 1937, and was referred to the City Planning Commission early in 1938. Rights of way were acquired and construction on parts of the new system is already under way.

In Manhattan steady progress has been made in the construction of East River Drive and plans have been approved for stretches of this new highway which will ultimately assure a continuous express drive along the East River from 125th Street to the Battery. The West Side Express Highway has been carried over Canal Street. During the year the proposed creation of Harlem River Drive was also advanced. When finished these riverfront highways will encircle Manhattan with continuous thoroughfares, practically without traffic lights or dangerous intersections. Meantime, inadequate approaches have been provided for the Midtown Vehicular Tunnel to Queens and to the Lincoln Tunnel to New Jersey. Much remains to be done to give proper connections between the bridges and tunnels and the new river drives; the still more pressing problem of providing express routes across Manhattan is unsolved.

The proposed Midtown Underpass was deferred because of lack of funds. It is obvious, however, that relief to crosstown traffic in Manhattan is most urgent. The Commission has not been able as yet to analyze this problem but it is clear that in the creation of a Master Plan satisfactory crossings must be indicated. Street widenings offer some relief in limited areas, but a solution can be found only by building express ways, either underground

or above the street level. Both methods may be necessary at different points. In the future plan of Manhattan, which will indicate the necessity for rebuilding over large areas, study will need to be made of the possibilities for combining the rehabilitation of slum areas with express highways in different ways at different points on the island. Such express ways might be combined with parkway treatment in the residential areas east and west, and become elevated highways, or second-story streets, where they traverse business sections. Building above streets may be necessary since this would avoid subways and other underground structures. There should be no objection to the kinds of elevated highways represented by parkways running through residential neighborhoods, or of elevated roadways such as those carrying Park Avenue around and through the buildings at Grand Central Terminal.

The Manhattan approaches to Queensborough Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge and the proposed Brooklyn-Battery crossing are special problems to be studied in connection with transverse highways in the borough. Removal of the Sixth Avenue Elevated, by creating another important business street, should tend to spread the business center and reduce congestion in the center of the island.

Acquisition of the rights of way for the Bronx River and Hutchinson River parkway extensions was an important step in providing for the future highway needs of that borough. The widening of Eastern Boulevard, also authorized during 1938, was another much needed improvement closely related to the parkway extensions and the approaches to Triborough and the new Bronx-Whitestone bridges. With the opening of the westerly approach to Triborough bridge and the completion of other connections between the Triborough and George Washington bridges the movement of traffic will be greatly improved. Construction of the parkway extensions is badly needed for passenger vehicles. The next step in improving traffic conditions in the Bronx should be to facilitate commercial traffic to and from New England and upstate.

Reconstruction of Shore Parkway and its extension, and the building of Southern Parkway will give Brooklyn a waterfront

drive which will make large outlying areas in that borough accessible. These parts of the Circumferential or Belt Parkway, while serving local traffic needs and opening up sections near the shores of Jamaica Bay, are important links in the complete encircling of the Greater City with express drives and parkways.

In recommending these parkway authorizations, the Commission emphasized their relation to the highway system of the city and cited additions necessary to make them fully effective. Shore Drive now ends at Owl's Head, a considerable distance from downtown Brooklyn and the Brooklyn and Manhattan bridges. To complete this comprehensive highway system it will be necessary to construct the proposed Brooklyn-Battery crossing and connect the Brooklyn end of the crossing with the Shore Parkway by means of an elevated highway. A further extension should include the construction of a crossing at the Narrows to connect Shore Parkway with parkways on Staten Island and through them with the bridges to New Jersey and points South. Only then will the full use of Hutchinson River Parkway, the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge and the Belt Parkway be possible. Similarly, the Brooklyn-Battery crossing and its connections will integrate the entire outer belt of parkways with the West Side Express Highway and Henry Hudson Parkway as well as East River Drive.

Both Brooklyn and Queens will be served by the new Connecting Highway now under construction in those boroughs. This highway was initiated as a direct thoroughfare between lower Brooklyn and Triborough Bridge and its construction was expedited in order to serve during the period of the World's Fair. The route, as laid out, starts at Brooklyn Bridge Plaza, follows Tillary Street, which has been widened, to Navy Street. From this point to Classen Avenue it was proposed to widen Park Avenue. A plaza at Classen Avenue extends for a block or more north of Flushing Avenue. Rutledge and Penn Streets are to be used to carry the traffic to Union Avenue which has been widened, and a diagonal cut has been made from Union Avenue to Meeker Avenue, also widened,



leading to the new Meeker Avenue Bridge, thence across Queens to Triborough Bridge.

The Commission was called upon to expedite various map changes and other matters relating to this highway, and did so with the feeling that the project had progressed so far that nothing should be done to retard construction. However, the proposed widening of Park Avenue in Brooklyn, and the general scheme for handling traffic at Queens Boulevard, as well as the proposed method of carrying the highway over the New York and New Haven Connecting Railroad in Queens raised certain questions which seemed to warrant an examination by the Commission of the whole project. In cooperation with Borough President Ingersoll, the Commission is now studying possible alternatives which will improve the Brooklyn section of this project.

The Atlantic Avenue Improvement will, of course, be of great benefit to both Brooklyn and Queens. The plan to remove the tracks of the Long Island Railroad from the surface of parts of Atlantic Avenue was referred to the Commission and after public hearings the Commission approved the plan which later received the approval of the State Transit Commission. With the adoption of the so-called Grade Crossing Agreement at the last election, the way seems open to bring about this much needed improvement. The effect will be to give Brooklyn and Queens a virtually new highway, several miles in length and 120 feet wide. With proper treatment of the roadways this new artery should greatly expedite traffic and enhance the amenities along the route.

Where Atlantic Avenue crosses East New York Avenue, it is important that the grade separation plans provide for a badly needed connection between Interborough Parkway and Eastern Parkway. The problem at this intersection is a complicated one, and the Commission is represented on a special committee to supervise the working out of a thoroughly adequate solution.

Much of the activity relating to new parkways and highways has centered in Queens, partly in preparation for the World's Fair, which has put this borough years ahead in highway construction.



This is true of all kinds of highways, from parkways to local streets. The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge, now nearing completion, and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel are new major connections with the Bronx and Manhattan. All of the new approaches to the Triborough and Whitestone bridges are of special advantage to Queens, as are other connections with Brooklyn and Long Island.

Grand Central, Interborough and Southern State parkways are among the finest examples of city highways in the United States. The Bronx-Whitestone Bridge is linked with Grand Central Parkway at the head of Flushing Bay. Cross Island Parkway, beginning at the bridge, crosses Grand Central and connects with Southern State Parkway, as well as the Southern and Shore parkways and Cross Bay Boulevard. The latter should in time be converted into a genuine parkway leading directly to the sea.

Progress has also been made in developing commercial and general arterial highways in Queens. Cross Island Boulevard parallels Cross Island Parkway from Whitestone Bridge to Union Turnpike and Hillside Avenue, both of which are being extended to the city limits. Woodhaven Boulevard, already widened to 150 feet from Queens Boulevard to Myrtle Avenue, is being widened to the same extent from Myrtle Avenue to Cross Bay Boulevard, thus creating a wide, continuing highway of adequate width through central Queens to the Rockaways. To make full use of Woodhaven Boulevard a direct connection with Interborough Parkway is needed.

An express highway from the Queens terminal of the Midtown Tunnel has been authorized as far as the Connecting Highway. Further study is required to determine the ultimate route of this highway to Queens Boulevard and Horace Harding Boulevard. Many other major highway improvements under way in Queens will give that borough a modern highway system superior to that in any other part of the city.

In the Rockaways, Beach Channel Drive has been opened and a new plaza created between Cross Bay Boulevard and the sea, where a drive of a mile and a half is being constructed along the

new parks on the ocean front. This new drive will connect with Beach Channel Drive at the East and West ends, as well as at the plaza, where a grade separation is being constructed. Beach Channel bridge is being rebuilt and the roadway widened as part of the improvement being carried out by the New York City Parkway Authority. Parts of the old Long Island Motor Parkway in Queens have also been acquired by the city and are to be incorporated in the highway system.

With the opening of the new parkways and express highways, travel in the metropolitan area has been greatly improved except at those points where bottlenecks remain. The highways and those bridges and tunnels with sufficient approaches do their work well and are worth their cost. The City has benefited greatly from the work of the bridge, tunnel and parkway authorities, which have spent large sums in constructing approaches to their facilities. This method of financing such improvements is to be encouraged. Real express highways do not cost more than the sums spent on expensive street widenings, which merely carry traffic a few blocks to another crossing or bottleneck. With the building of a few more really satisfactory express highways it should be found that ordinary streets are of sufficient width to serve their purposes. We do not need more streets; indeed we need fewer; but we do need more effective express ways to take the great volume of traffic which moves to and from common centers.

With the exception of Manhattan, where express ways across town are badly needed, New York City as a whole is making progress toward a solution of that part of its traffic problem which has to do with moving cars. The parking and garage problem, unnecessary trucking caused by an inefficient distribution system, and other cognate problems remain. In the outlying sections it is still possible to avoid the kinds of traffic congestion now common in all business districts, by making provision for parking areas near neighborhood shopping centers and in limiting the size of such centers. In the older sections, parking and garage accom-

modations must be developed as part of comprehensive replanning and rehabilitation.

## Additional Parks and Playgrounds

Many new parks and playgrounds were added to the city during the year. The Board of Estimate referred to the Commission sites proposed by Commissioner Moses in many parts of the city to be used for this purpose; a large number of these are for small parks and playgrounds to be developed in connection with new parkways and other improvements.

Of special interest and importance was the acquisition and laying out of a series of continuing parks extending for a mile and a half at Rockaway Beach. This is a part of the Rockaway Improvement, which includes the widening of Cross Bay Boulevard, the rebuilding of Broad Channel Bridge, the creation of a wide plaza extending the full width of the peninsula at Cross Bay Boulevard, with traffic separation on the north side, and the construction of a seaside drive along the waterfront adjacent to the new strip of beach parks. This improvement is being financed largely by the New York City Parkway Authority, formed by the merging of the Marine Parkway Bridge and the Henry Hudson Parkway Authorities. Bonds to the amount of 18 million dollars were authorized for construction and for part of the land acquisition. The bonds are to be serviced and amortized by tolls on the Cross Bay, Marine Parkway and Henry Hudson bridges.

Still more extensive in area are the parks created along the rights of way of the new parkways, which will be of considerable local benefit as well as serving as parts of the ribbon park system of highways in Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx. One of the largest of these new parks is at Canarsie, bordering on Jamaica Bay, which with the development of Marine Park and Jacob Riis Park in the Rockaways will greatly enhance the recreational facilities around the west end of the Bay.

In Manhattan the most extensive new park development has taken place along the East River Drive on the lower East Side,

where the park area from Corlears' Hook northward to 12th Street is rapidly being completed. Farther north other improvements included acquisition of land at 103rd Street and the East River Drive to serve as a small park and playground and as a terminal for a pedestrian bridge to Ward's Island, which is to be transformed into a park and made accessible to the crowded upper East Side. A number of new playgrounds have been acquired in Manhattan. One on East 106th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues; one at West 43rd Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues, and another on West 16th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. A large park and several playgrounds are to be parts of the Harlem River Drive. Plans have been prepared for extending and improving City Hall Park following the demolition of the old Federal Building.

In Brooklyn, in addition to the parks and playgrounds assured as parts of parkways construction, the Coney Island Beach has been extended easterly by the acquisition of new land, and a large acreage of land under water has been acquired to protect Marine Park and permit its extension southward. A large new playground was acquired at Third Avenue, Degraw, Nevins and Douglass Streets, and another on Atlantic and Liberty Avenues, at Elton and Linwood Streets.

In addition to the Rockaway Beach improvement, a number of parks and playgrounds have been provided in Queens along Southern and Cross Island parkways. Two large new playgrounds have been created on Atlantic Avenue, one at 88th Street and 87th Avenue and another at 95th Avenue, 125th and 127th Streets. The Park Department is also constructing a waterfront park and extensive playground facilities in connection with the Queens-bridge housing project.

In the Bronx, new playgrounds and small parks are to be created along the rights of way of the Bronx River and Hutchinson River parkway extensions, and a new playground site has been acquired at East 136th Street and Alexander Avenue.

All of these parks and playgrounds are well located and are

valuable additions to the recreational areas of the city. The playgrounds in the older sections are all badly needed. The method of selecting sites is highly practical, Park Commissioner Moses doing his utmost, with limited resources, to secure the best available sites in areas where play space is at a premium. It should be clear that all the needs for parks and playgrounds in these sections cannot be met in this way. To meet the demand for such spaces, it will be necessary to provide them in connection with the replanning and rebuilding of the congested areas. Many of the new playgrounds are located near schools which are wholly without playgrounds or which have insufficient play areas.

## The Background of New York City's Capital Budget for 1939

Chapter 9 of the Charter requires the Commission to prepare an annual proposed capital budget and capital program for the succeeding five years. In approaching this duty, during the summer of 1938, the Commission had certain precedents for guidance. On May 12, 1933, the former Board of Estimate and Apportionment adopted an amendment to the Greater New York Charter by adding Section 2266(d), which provided in part that:

In order that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment may annually approve a budget showing a work program of public improvements, the several departments, bureaus, offices, boards or commissions shall file, on or before the first day of December, in each year, with the Director of the Budget, a list of projects deemed desirable to be undertaken for the public good.

Under this local law the Bureau of the Budget prepared Capital Budgets for 1936, 1937 and 1938. Under the new Charter the preparation of a capital *budget* is continued, under the jurisdiction of the Commission, but, in addition, the Commission is required to prepare a so-called capital *program* for a longer period. The new Charter, further, requires more detailed information for each capital project recommended than was previously requested. The new Charter, also, in its provision for a capital program, indicates



clearly the close relationship and desirable integration which must exist between a master plan and its financing. For, in effect, the program represents the scheduling, in time, and within the city's expected spending power, of those projects required in carrying out the Master Plan.

In July, 1938, the Commission addressed to each City Department concerned, a detailed request for the submission, on prescribed forms, of estimates for the capital projects which they desired to undertake in the calendar year, 1939. The projects submitted totalled approximately 250 million dollars. This figure was comparable with an average annual expenditure over the preceding ten years for capital projects of approximately 110 million dollars.

It was, therefore, clear that the Commission, whatever the total figure for 1939 might finally be, would have to cut drastically. In accordance with Charter requirements, public departmental hearings were held during the month of September. Later, executive hearings, attended by the Director of the Budget, were conducted. At both these series of hearings each individual project presented by the city departments was carefully studied.

Through this study, the Commission clearly felt the need for both a master plan, against which individual projects might be considered, and a better and more logical presentation by each department of its own projects. Many departments presented their projects in such a way that it was difficult for the Commission to see their relationship to that department's long term plans. Because of the lack of sufficient time, limited available funds, and the absence of a Master Plan, the Commission could do little more than select projects on the basis of prior commitments, and requested replacement needs. As the Commission stated in its capital budget message, it realized that the budget which was finally presented on November 1 could not be considered to have been based upon realistic criteria.

Under the terms of the Charter the Commission was required to present a capital budget limited, in the total amount available for totally new projects, to an amount which should be certified by

the Mayor on September 15. In the course of preparing the budget the sum of \$25,000,000 originally certified by the Mayor was cut to \$15,000,000. This was slightly above the final total for new projects proposed by the City Planning Commission. In brief, the proposed capital budget for 1939 as submitted November 1, 1938, called for authorizations of \$146,022,143.94, including \$32,175. from PWA funds. Of this amount \$57,729,136 represented renewals of funds for improvements previously approved by the Board of Estimate in the 1938 capital outlay budget; \$34,411,164.09 represented various types of "reserves" or additional funds earmarked to complete pending projects; \$38,329,500 represented expenditures outside the debt limit for water supply and transit; and \$545,750 represented small projects financed through tax notes and therefore also outside the debt limit. This left the sum of \$14,974,418.85, which was recommended by the Commission for new projects, in conformity with the Mayor's maximum. These figures included approximately \$5,000,000 as a portion of the city's contribution to the 1939 WPA program.

In developing the budget the Commission had occasion to study the city's financial situation, including its capacity to borrow long term funds. This capacity is based legally under the Constitution of the State of New York upon the assessed valuation of the city's taxable real estate. Anything, therefore, which changes this assessed valuation changes the city's debt-incurring power. The problem of changes in the assessed valuation of taxable real estate did not present itself in the development of the total figure for 1939, but was important in studying the program for 1940 to 1944. Although the Commission did not have time to investigate in detail all of the probable forces which might influence assessed valuations during the next five years, it did presume a slight annual increase in assessed valuations over this period of time, in contrast with an unchanging total valuation estimated by the Comptroller.

In considering, therefore, the city's financial situation, as it affected the presentation of a capital budget for 1939, the Commission started from the known assessed valuation, on July 1, 1938,

of \$16,650,297,000. The capacity of the city to issue long term obligations to finance capital improvements, is limited to 10% of the above total. Bonds already issued, and commitments already undertaken by the city, had reduced the margin available for further borrowing to a small figure. Subsequent analysis by the Commission revealed that, after deducting the capital budget for 1939, the debt-incurring power of the City of New York would be approximately 75 million dollars. The various computations used to arrive at this figure were explained in Table A of the Proposed Capital Budget. These computations need not be referred to in detail here; they do indicate that the outstanding debt-incurring power of the City was small in view of the needs of a city as large as New York.

Experience in developing the capital budget for 1939 and the capital program for 1940-1944 made it clear to the Commission that in the future three fiscal problems would have to be considered:

### (1) *Assessable Improvements*

At present, assessable improvements, when financed by assessment bonds have to be deducted from the borrowing capacity of the city; but they are not regulated under a budgetary system in the same manner as are other physical improvements made by the city. They affect the physical structure of the city in the same manner as expenditures under the capital budget. In view of this situation it is the opinion of those concerned with these matters that assessable improvements should be so included. Studies are now being undertaken by the Department of City Planning to develop basic factual material which will at least relate assessable improvements to capital improvements.

### (2) *Assessed Valuations*

The past history and probable future of assessed valuations have to be carefully investigated if the capital program is to be based upon realistic estimates.

### (3) *Further Sources of Revenue*

Because of the indicated stringent financial position of the city, the Commission felt that fundamental studies should be made regarding possible new sources of revenue by all those agencies of the city concerned with its fiscal position.

On December 2, 1938 the Capital Budget for 1939 was amended and adopted by the Board of Estimate, for the most part as proposed, except for the insertion of two new tables containing projects expected to be self-liquidating, or carried out of savings, and projects authorized but for which appropriations are subject to the availability of funds. On December 31 the capital budget for 1939 was certified as finally adopted after consideration by the Council, substantially in the form approved by the Board of Estimate on December 2.

### **Materials from the Mayor's Committee**

Through the cooperation of the Mayor's Committee on City Planning and the Works Progress Administration, all basic data and studies made for the Mayor's Committee were turned over to the Commission. These materials included tabulations, maps, and diagrams on: Streets and highways, surface and rapid transit, a block-by-block analysis of the 1934 Real Property Inventory, present and suggested future residential pattern of city development, population trends, sanitation, water supply, education, parks, city finances, zoning, industry, and land values; and a card file on publicly owned property.

The following reports covering various phases of the Mayor's Committee studies were also made available to the Commission: Program for Permanent Improvements; Financing New York City's Future Permanent Improvements; New York City's Highway System—Present and Future; Water Supply and Sanitation; Status and Trends of Industry in New York City; Education and Parks; Population Study and Residential Area Analysis. These materials, which furnished an extensive factual background necessary to any consideration of the City's problems, proved of considerable value

to the Commission in the preparation of the proposed capital program for the years 1940 to 1944 inclusive.

The several community studies jointly sponsored by the Mayor's Committee on City Planning and local neighborhood committees were also turned over to the Commission. These community studies included East Harlem, Greenwich Village, Bay Ridge, Riverdale, East Bronx, Long Island City, Harlem, Forest Hills, Sutphin Boulevard, Yorkville, Sunnyside-Woodside, Gravesend, and Flushing. Special zoning studies were made for a portion of the lower East Side and the Midtown section of Manhattan. These studies included maps, charts and tabulations in greater detail than was possible in the more general citywide studies mentioned above, showing topography, detailed land use, population distribution, traffic accidents, streets and highways, sewer and water lines, transportation, parks, tax arrears, rents and vacancies, existing zoning, and recreation, health, and educational resources.

In order to make this material generally available, the Department of City Planning had hoped to arrange for publication of the final reports of the Mayor's Committee in two volumes, the first to contain various citywide studies and the second the community studies, but has not been able to secure the necessary funds. The manuscripts are prepared if the opportunity should arise.

The Works Progress Administration also turned over to the Commission a model of a large portion of New York City. This model, measuring 22 feet by 37 feet, is at a scale of 300 feet to the inch. All streets are shown in their proper location and at their established grade. The height and bulk of buildings as well as the type of development, whether business, residential or open space, are shown for each block in the city. In addition old and new law tenements are designated by means of color, as are public buildings and large private institutions.

At the present time all of Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn have been shown on the model, and a major portion of Queens, but only the northeast sector of Staten Island. The Commission proposed completion of this model as a project in the 1939 capital



budget, but it was rejected by the Council. When completed, and brought up-to-date, in respect to the major physical improvements made or authorized since its construction, it will be useful to many agencies as well as to the Department of City Planning; it shows the topographic and geographic relationships between the various parts of the city, and can be employed in illustrating the location and effect of various elements of the Master Plan, on the existing physical structure of the city. Arrangements have been made, meanwhile, to utilize the model as part of the city exhibit at the World's Fair.

## The Master Plan

Frequent reference has been made in this report to the Master Plan, which the Commission will in time develop in the spirit of the Charter. As provided in section 197, the master plan will show physical features existing and proposed, which are necessary for the improvement of the city and the needs of its people. In order that this important function may be carried forward effectively, the commission has established a Division of Master Plan within the Department. It is the responsibility of this division to carry on all the necessary preparatory studies.

It may be said that the Plan's purpose is to indicate all elements of a practical pattern for the City of New York both in the near term and in the more distant future. Evidently it must take into account not only obvious and specific physical needs, but also social and economic influences with a bearing upon the development of the city. Thus, changes in the city's place in the life of the state and nation, and factors which alter the financial, industrial and maritime position of New York, must all be given their due weight.

The charter also provides that when the Master Plan is officially adopted by the Commission, no improvement or project affecting the Plan or the city map, and no addition or change in the city map, shall be acted upon by the Board of Estimate, except after a report from the City Planning Commission. The Plan thus will become a guide to the deliberations of the Commission and to the Board of

Estimate. In a very real sense, it will be dynamic. Unlike the city map, it will suggest rather than fix the location of future improvements. It will become the basis for progressive amendments to the city map, and a guide to capital budgeting. In addition it will influence construction programs and policies of state and federal agencies. Not only is it concerned with public improvements and their location, but also it must indicate desirable trends and locations for semi-public and private construction, so that these may fit in with an agreed pattern for the future structure of the city.

Steps have been taken to dovetail master-planning with the annual development of the capital budget. In this way the public improvement proposals will be closely correlated with the capacity of the city to meet their construction cost. The Plan will thus be a guide to the practical, long-term financial program.

The Division is determining the essential features for a plan. For example, New York in common with most large cities, faces difficulties inherent in its mere size. Time spent in travel between home and work, and the cost of providing facilities for this travel are proving most serious. It is expected that ways and means for correcting conditions which come under the general category of "friction of space" will be discovered. The problem is intensified in New York by the constricting influence of water barriers on the physical development of the city. These barriers have not yet been adequately overcome. Two general solutions for overcoming the friction of space will naturally occur to any student of this problem. One is to encourage people to live closer to the main centers of employment; and the second is to encourage the growth of new business and industrial districts away from the heart of the city and closely adjacent to established residential neighborhoods.

At this stage it would be premature to suggest detailed methods for these two desirable solutions. In general terms it may, however, be said that old residential areas situated close to the principal business districts are now largely developed with antiquated buildings which have lived out their span of years. The rebuilding of these areas, both under public and private auspices, can be done in

such a way as to make them so attractive that people will prefer to live in these convenient locations rather than seek equally pleasant surroundings far from their places of work. It is axiomatic that new business centers will spring up at the junction points of transit lines and major arteries. Further improvements and additions to the transportation and street system could, therefore, emphasize the creation of such junction points, particularly in districts quite far removed from the downtown areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

The Division is now developing a likely pattern for the distribution of the various types of land uses (small homes, apartments, business and industry) throughout the City. This will suggest subsequent studies of transit facilities, arterial highways, and the like.

Just as the building of the city in the past was a long and gradual process, so its future rebuilding and development along lines envisaged in the Plan will necessarily take a great many years. In recognition of this fact the Commission has concluded that the Master Plan ought not be considered to be a definite picture of the City as it might appear at some specific date, but rather that it should be presented in the form of a series of maps and charts showing progress toward a more efficient and more convenient framework. Thus the Master Plan should indicate public improvements capable of realization within the next ten or twelve years; further improvements that should be considered for construction during a subsequent period of years; and a still further series of proposals which might well be carried out in the later decades of this century, resulting in a basic framework or physical structure which should be in all ways adequate for the ultimate population of the city. Every step in this process will of course be the result of careful study and reflection on the part of the Commission and its staff, as well as other agencies of the city government. All specific proposals will be subject to public hearings and wide discussion.

The Commission presents this Report with a realization that accomplishments during its first year fall far short of its own expect-

tations and perhaps the hopes of many persons who expect this new agency of the Municipal Government to help bring about civic betterments. Nevertheless, members of the Commission feel that the inherent love of order which caused citizens to support the proposal for a city planning body, has already produced a measure of progress. The mere existence of the Commission has at least emphasized the need for more careful city planning, and perhaps for the merging of private and public resources in an effort toward improvement.

The work of developing the Master Plan should provide the comprehensive background needed for true generalization; and the plan itself should prove to be the flexible instrument needed for guiding the city's growth both from day to day and throughout the decades of the future. If it is properly used it must make the city a better place than it could otherwise be.

## The Planning Agency—

### A New Element in Local Government

Neither the need nor the practice of planning is of recent origin. Practically every part, every facility of our cities, both old and modern, are the result of one kind of planning—the simple kind which considers only the thing immediately in prospect. What has been lacking to date has been the comprehensive outlook and the coordinated fitting together required to make all the elements of a complex social mechanism function in concert.

The talents brought into government service heretofore have been of other sorts. The elected official has had to be responsive, because immediately representative, to political pressure, in the present. The technical experts to be found in the various divisions, have been concerned with administrative requirements—even to the extent of competing with other departments which ought to be working toward a common end. There has never been a separate agency charged with constant consideration for the growth of the whole organism which was provided with facilities for gathering

and analyzing the necessary facts, and which had time for ripening its conclusions. There have been fortunate occasions, such as New York is now experiencing, when an elected executive, and even the heads of his departments, have had care for the future and have taken pains to plan, but they have not been frequent in the history of American cities.

In recent years planning commissions have been established in numerous places, but usually they have lacked some essential power for effectiveness. The Planning Commission established under the New York City Charter is implemented to a greater degree than has been true in any other instance. With official cooperation such as it enjoyed during the first year, and the understanding support of the enlightened civic groups largely responsible for its establishment, it should perform a useful coordinative and directive function.

Pending practical experience it is probably unnecessary to inquire too closely into the theoretical place of the planning agency in the government structure. Apparently it borrows something from each of the three older traditional branches. The Commission's sole responsibility for initiating zoning changes is distinctly legislative; its preparation of the capital budget is executive; the manner prescribed for hearing and decision as between various types of public improvement is essentially judicial. Clearly it is a novel agency of local government, called into being to meet obvious and urgent needs, particularly the need for long run tests of current policy and for coordination in the interest of the future.

Since these functions and relationships are somewhat new, they are apt to be misunderstood, even by those who supported the provisions of the new Charter. This is most likely to be true of individuals and agencies having special interests or enthusiasms which they sometimes seem to feel the Planning Commission ought to forward without question. It is unfortunate that all interested citizens cannot sit with the Commission, see the city in its entirety as it appears in the cold light of competing fact, and grasp the picture of an emerging city of the future which shall be more effi-



cient, more prosperous, and more amenable to human desire. It is a chastening experience to sit through a year's hearings on the capital budget, trying then to cover many needs with small funds. More people ought to undergo it.

Even such a common experience would not, of course, assure unanimity of opinion. But it surely would give pause to the narrowly partisan enthusiast; and it would certainly furnish an education in coordination. In so doing it would demonstrate also the contribution which planning has to make in the administration of local affairs, and perhaps gain for the planning agency tolerance transcending special interest in any particular feature of the city's life. This tolerance and sympathy the Commission certainly hopes to deserve and to get as time passes; it is hard to see how planning can amount to much without it.



# APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE  
BUSINESS OF THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ADOPTED FEBRUARY 1, 1939

A—GENERAL RULES

101. The regular public meetings of the Commission shall be held each Wednesday at 2.30 p.m. in Room 16, City Hall, unless otherwise ordered.

102. Special public meetings may be called by the Chairman or by four members.

103. A quorum shall consist of four members.

104. Final action by the Commission shall be by the affirmative vote of not less than four members at a meeting open to the public.

105. Except by unanimous consent, matters upon which public hearings are required by law shall lie over until a regular meeting following the public hearing.

106. The order of business at regular public meetings shall be as follows:

(a) Roll call.

(b) Approval of minutes of previous meetings.

(c) Adoption of reports.

(d) Fixing dates for future hearings.

(e) Hearings.

107. Matters not on the calendar shall be considered only by unanimous consent.

108. The Chair shall direct a roll call upon every proposition to be acted upon, and all votes shall be taken by the ayes and nays.

109. The vote upon every proposition voted upon shall be recorded in the minutes.

110. At public hearings those opposed to a proposition shall be heard first and then those in favor thereof, unless otherwise ordered.

111. City employees designated by the Commission shall be

the only persons assigned within the guard rail of the dais during public meetings.

112. All reports, whether from members of the Commission or staff of the Department of City Planning, shall be incorporated in the record.

113. All proposals scheduled for public hearings shall be duly advertised in accordance with Charter provisions. In addition thereto in the case of zoning changes, notice thereof shall be posted at the area affected.

#### B—THE SECRETARY TO THE COMMISSION

##### Notices, Calendars, Minutes and Communications

201. Notice of all special meetings shall be given to each member by the Secretary.

202. The Secretary shall prepare a calendar of the business to be presented and considered at each public meeting. The matters thereon shall be arranged in the order prescribed by the order of business (Rule 106), and shall be properly classified. The Secretary shall also keep a record of undetermined matters, which have been laid over.

203. The Secretary shall close the calendar at 4 p.m. on the Thursday before each Wednesday meeting.

204. The Secretary shall cause the minutes of each public meeting to be printed in the CITY RECORD and shall thereafter cause the same to be printed and bound in volumes of convenient size, with an index thereto.

205. At the request of any member, minutes and a record of votes at executive meetings shall be taken.

206. All communications, petitions and reports intended for consideration shall be addressed to the Commission and delivered at or mailed to the Secretary's office and shall consist of an original accompanied by nine copies.

207. The Secretary shall transmit to the Board of Estimate and other City departments affected thereby true copies of all reports and resolutions adopted.



C—FORM OF SUBMISSION OF MATTERS OTHER THAN  
CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS AND ZONING CHANGES

301. All matters shall be fully and clearly presented and shall be accompanied by such of the following material, titled to indicate its scope and intent, as is practicable and reasonably required for adequate consideration:

(a) *Descriptive Material.* A statement setting forth the nature, purpose and extent of the proposal; the needs for which the improvement was initiated; its relationship to existing facilities, if any; and its co-ordination to any existing long-range program. The statement shall clearly indicate the objectives of the improvement, the local or city-wide advantages, the general, social and economic benefits to be derived therefrom, etc.

(b) *Graphic Material.* Plans, elevations, profiles, sections, sketches, perspectives and other instruments sufficient to indicate clearly the location, nature and extent of the proposal. All maps, plans, profiles, sections and other drawings shall contain such dimensions, grades, roadway treatment, walks and other controlling data as are essential to a comprehensive study. Maps and plans shall be submitted in conformity with the following:

(1) Existing conditions to be retained shall be shown by solid black lines of single strength.

(2) Existing conditions to be eliminated shall be shown by dashed black lines of single strength.

(3) Proposed or new conditions shall be shown by solid red lines.

(4) When feasible, areas comprehended by proposed conditions shall be shaded or hatched.

(c) *Cost Estimates.* Estimated costs shall be included with each project even if only approximate and should indicate any additional costs that will be involved for annual maintenance, operation or additional permanent improvements as a part of a long-range program; also, whether the improvement will be revenue producing

and, if so, to what extent; also, the recommended apportionment of cost of the improvement and proposed source of funds for the project.

#### D—CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

401. All capital projects shall be presented in such form and contain such information as may be required by the City Planning Commission prior to the date for submission.

#### E—MASTER PLAN

501. All matters submitted for inclusion in or comparison with the master plan shall be presented in such form and contain such information as may be required by the Commission during the development and subsequent revision of the master plan and should include, if possible, such available data and instruments as are indicated in section 301(a), (b) and (c).

#### F—PETITIONS REQUESTING A CHANGE OF ZONE PURSUANT TO SECTION 201 OF THE CHARTER

601. A petition requesting a change of a building zone map should be addressed to the Commission, rather than to an individual, and must contain the original signatures of the petitioners and nine copies, which may be typewritten, including the signatures, and must state clearly and concisely:

- (a) The change desired.
- (b) The reasons therefor.
- (c) The boundaries of the proposed change.
- (d) A description of the property of each petitioner by block and lot number.
- (e) Each signed sheet shall contain the same heading.

602. All signatures to a petition must be duly acknowledged before a notary. Individual acknowledgments may be taken or a subscribing witness may witness and acknowledge the signatures of one or more petitioners. In the case of corporate petitioners, the corporate name shall be signed by an officer thereunto duly authorized, the corporate seal shall be affixed and a corporate form of acknowledgment executed.

603. Petitions containing the duly acknowledged signatures of at least 50 per cent of the owners of the area sought to be changed will be noticed for hearing. Petitions containing the duly acknowledged signatures of not less than 20 per cent of the owners of the area sought to be changed will be considered to determine whether the public interest requires the initiation by the Commission of a proceeding for such change in zone.

604. At least three identical posters, not less than 8½ by 11 inches in size, describing the proposed change and stating that all persons interested in the change will be notified of the date fixed by the Commission for a public hearing on the matter, provided they file written requests for such notice with the Secretary to the Commission, must be conspicuously exhibited for at least one week within one month prior to the submission of the petition. These posters must be placed not more than 200 feet apart along the entire length of the frontages sought to be changed and on any streets in the rear less than 300 feet distant therefrom. A copy of this poster must be submitted with the petition.

605. A notice containing information similar to that contained in the poster must be sent by registered mail, return receipt requested, to every property owner within the area sought to be changed, the area immediately adjacent thereto for a distance of 100 feet, and the area directly opposite thereto for a distance of 100 feet from such opposite frontage. Return receipt cards and a copy of the notice must be submitted with the petition.

606. A list containing the names of all owners to whom notices are sent, together with information concerning the location and extent of their property, must be submitted with the petition.

607. A sworn statement from the petitioner or his representative, stating that posters have been exhibited and notices sent by registered mail to affected property owners, as required by these rules, must be submitted with the petition.

608. Forms for the petition, the sworn statement (proof of service), posters and notices are available at the office of the Com-

mission where they may be obtained at a cost of three cents each, or the petitioner may prepare and use similar forms of his own.

#### G—SUSPENSION OF RULES

701. The suspension of any of these rules may be ordered by unanimous vote.

## APPENDIX B

### CALENDAR OF CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

Public Meeting, Zoning, and Capital Budget Dates for 1939<sup>1</sup>

January	11th	1st Meeting
January	18th	2nd Meeting
January	25th	3rd Meeting
February	1st	4th Meeting
February	8th	5th Meeting
February	15th	6th Meeting
March	1st	7th Meeting
March	8th	8th Meeting
March	15th	9th Meeting
March	22nd	10th Meeting
March	29th	11th Meeting
April	1st	First day for taxpayers to file applications for changes in zoning resolutions or regulations, pursuant to Section 201 of the New York City Charter.
April	12th	12th Meeting
April	19th	13th Meeting
April	26th	14th Meeting
May	1st	Last day for taxpayers to file applications for changes in zoning resolutions or regulations, pursuant to Section 201 of the New York City Charter. (Last day specified by the Charter, April 30th, is a Sunday.)
May	3rd	15th Meeting

<sup>1</sup> This is published for the convenience of the public; the meeting dates are tentative and subject to change by the Commission. Unless otherwise indicated, all regular public meetings and hearings are held on Wednesdays at 2:30 p.m. in Room 16, City Hall, Manhattan.



May	5th	First day Commission may consider and act upon applications by taxpayers for changes in zoning resolutions or regulations and hold public hearings thereon, notice of which is published in the CITY RECORD for the ten days of publication immediately prior thereto, pursuant to Sections 200 and 201 of the New York City Charter.
-----	-----	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

May	10th	16th Meeting
May	17th	17th Meeting
May	24th	18th Meeting

June	7th	19th Meeting
June	14th	20th Meeting
June	21st	21st Meeting
June	28th	22nd Meeting

June	30th	Last day Commission may consider and act upon applications by taxpayers for changes in zoning resolutions or regulations and hold public hearings thereon, notice of which is published in the CITY RECORD for the ten days of publication immediately prior thereto, pursuant to Sections 200 and 201 of the New York City Charter
------	------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

August	1st	The Commission publishes in the CITY RECORD a schedule of departmental hearings to be held between August 7th and August 31st, at which the heads of agencies or their representatives or subordinates appear to explain their departmental estimates for the Capital
--------	-----	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Budget, pursuant to Section 216 of the New York City Charter.

- |           |        |                                                |
|-----------|--------|------------------------------------------------|
| August    | 7th to | During this period, the Commission conducts    |
| August    | 31st   | departmental hearings at which the heads of    |
|           |        | agencies or their representatives or subordi-  |
|           |        | nates appear to explain their departmental     |
|           |        | estimates for the Capital Budget, the exact    |
|           |        | place, date and time to be published in a      |
|           |        | schedule in the CITY RECORD on August 1st,     |
|           |        | pursuant to Section 216 of the New York        |
|           |        | City Charter, which provides: "The public      |
|           |        | may be present at such hearings but shall not  |
|           |        | have the right to be heard, . . ."             |
|           |        |                                                |
| August    | 15th   | The Commission receives from the Comptrol-     |
|           |        | ler a report, as of July 1st, on outstanding   |
|           |        | obligations, commenting on the City's finan-   |
|           |        | cial condition and advising as to the maxi-    |
|           |        | mum amount and nature of debt which in his     |
|           |        | opinion the City may soundly incur for         |
|           |        | Capital Projects during 1940 to 1945, in-      |
|           |        | clusive, which report is published in the      |
|           |        | CITY RECORD, pursuant to Section 212 of the    |
|           |        | New York City Charter.                         |
|           |        |                                                |
| September | 15th   | The Commission receives from the Mayor the     |
|           |        | report of the Budget Director to the Mayor     |
|           |        | as of September 1st, as to the maximum debt    |
|           |        | which in his opinion the City may incur for    |
|           |        | Capital Projects for 1940 to 1945, inclusive,  |
|           |        | etc., together with the Mayor's Certificate as |
|           |        | to the maximum debt, which in his opinion      |
|           |        | the City may soundly incur for Capital         |

Projects during 1940, with his recommendations as to the Capital Projects to be included in the Capital Budget, pursuant to Sections 214 and 215 of the New York City Charter.

September	20th	23rd Meeting
October	3rd	The proposed Capital Budget, together with notice of public hearing thereon, is published in the CITY RECORD, pursuant to Section 216 of the New York City Charter.
October	4th	24th Meeting
October	10th	10:30 a.m. Public hearings begin on the Capital Budget as previously advertised and published in the CITY RECORD on October 3rd, pursuant to Section 216 of the New York City Charter.
October	18th	25th Meeting
November	1st	Not later than this date, the Commission adopts and submits to the Board of Estimate, to the Council, to the Director of the Budget and to the Comptroller a proposed Capital Budget for 1940 and a Capital Program for 1941 to 1945, inclusive, both of which are published in the CITY RECORD, pursuant to Section 217 of the New York City Charter.
November	1st	26th Meeting
November	15th	27th Meeting
November	22nd	28th Meeting

November 25th to December 4th	Between these dates the Board of Estimate adopts a Capital Budget for 1940, and not less than 15 days prior to the adoption of the Capital Budget, the Board of Estimate may request the Commission to furnish, with respect to a project not included in the Capital Program, information similar to that included in the Capital Program with its recommendations. Such information is to be submitted within ten days and published in the CITY RECORD, pursuant to Section 221 of the New York City Charter.
----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

December 6th	29th Meeting
December 13th	30th Meeting













